

# THE HISTORICAL TRAIL



Pilmore-Boardman Bicentennial Issue-1969

# The Historical Trail

Yearbook of the Historical Society of the  
Southern New Jersey Annual Conference of  
The United Methodist Church

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## **FOREWORD**

It is with pleasure that the Historical Society of the Southern New Jersey Conference dedicates this special issue of THE HISTORICAL TRAIL to the Pilmore-Boardman Bicentennial observance. In this way we hope that the significance of the Event that occurred 200 years ago and our celebration today can be preserved for future posterity.

This 8th issue of THE HISTORICAL TRAIL has come a long way since our first small mimeographed pamphlet was published in 1962. It is gratifying to note the reception this booklet has received and our ability to continue publishing it. Its purpose is to bring to light information on the glorious heritage of United Methodism within our Conference—its churches, ministers, laymen and organizations.

We are especially indebted to Bishop Prince A. Taylor Jr. and Dr. Frank B. Stanger for permission to publish their addresses given at the Bicentennial celebration.

This booklet is sent forth with the hope it may kindle a desire in you to know more about the glorious heritage of our faith. Pilmore and Boardman are long gone but may God continue to raise up young men to carry on the work they so willingly began.

ROBERT B. STEELMAN,  
President

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Jahn H. Coffee, Jr.

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## THE NEW WILDERNESS

by

BISHOP PRINCE A. TAYLOR, JR., D.D., Ed.D.  
Resident Bishop of the New Jersey Area

An historical address prepared for the Bicentennial of the arrival of Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman in America.

At the Leeds Conference of 1769, John Wesley called for volunteers from among the traveling preachers to serve "in the wilderness of America." It was in answer to this call that Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore volunteered to come. And it is in recognition of their arrival that we are here this afternoon. These men were young, idealistic, adventurous, and yet not without some trepidation. For however brave they may have been and however committed, to answer a call to a wilderness 3600 or more miles away, as preachers of the gospel—Methodist style—was no simple undertaking. They were the first regular preachers on the Continent as representatives of the Wesleyan movement.

They did not come merely as recruits to fill pulpits in a new church, for in the thinking of Mr. Wesley, it was not a new church to which they had come. He was not in competition with the Anglican Church—he was a part of it. His concern was not simply that of extending the Church across the seas, but with giving it a new dimension—a new dynamics, renewed vitality, and a new awakening. He was concerned with moving the Church out where the people were; to make it responsive to the call of God and the agonies of the world.

These young men—Boardman and Pilmore—were called upon to communicate a great tradition to people in a simple culture—"the wilderness of America."

The Methodist movement in the eighteenth century arose out of a profound awareness of the lack of a ministry which gave vitality to the church. It was the revival of the ministry which led to the revival of the church. The early usage of the term Methodist did not refer to a new sect. It was a derogatory characterization of certain clergymen and their lay preacher aides. These ministers sought to speak to needs which were being ignored by the established church. It was said of them: "They were ministers of the church, within the church, ministering to the church, and seeking to renew its vitality."

Wesley was not content merely to nurture the members of the society.

The whole world was his parish, and his was a ministry of love. It was to this ministry that these young men came, and it was in it they served.

While there may be different interpretations of the nature and extent of their success in America, it is abundantly clear what the sending of them by Mr. Wesley symbolized. He had the conviction that the hope of the wilderness was in the leadership of an enlightened and committed ministry.

Is not there a sense in which we—200 years after the arrival of these first regular preachers—desperately face the "wilderness of America"? Certainly it is not, in the sense of the vastness of space and the wilderness of animal life. We are no longer a simple, agrarian culture with unsophisticated needs and simple answers. We not only have the vast majority of our people living in cities, but increasingly our open spaces are becoming cities. We are the most affluent and technologically oriented nation in all the world. In the sense in which Mr. Wesley spoke, the wilderness of America is gone forever.

But despite our scientific advancement and ventures into outer space, is there not a sense in which we are still a wilderness? Random House Dictionary gives one definition of a wilderness as "a bewildering mass or collection." Bewilder means "to confuse or puzzle completely." I had always thought of a wilderness as a wild and uncultivated region. I have now come to believe that a wilderness can also be a state of confusion. If this be true, the "wilderness of America" is still with us, perhaps in a way that John Wesley never dreamed.

We have come a long way in America since 1769—from a foot-and-horseback culture to the moon age. Yet in human relations we are dealing with the same fundamental factors that tantalized them and continue to baffle us. And the call is for volunteers to communicate the faith.

The venture to the wilderness is one in which no man finds the realities equal to his anticipations. This was true even with the Apostle Paul, for there was a vast difference between the vision of the extended hand beckoning him to come to Macedonia and help, and the realities which he discovered on arrival.

I have watched with interest the enthusiasm of young people answering the call to the missionary field, and I have also seen the disillusionment on their faces when they were brought to grips with the realities of the task they chose. I can never forget a young woman who came to Liberia. She was so worked up over the idea of an assignment overseas that she could hardly wait for her ship to dock. But things were so different from what she

had expected. It was not the land of her dream. In the midst of my interview with her she said: "I really don't know what I'm doing over here." She soon discovered the reason for coming and became a most creative and committed missionary.

It would not be at all strange if Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor had some such feeling when they landed here two hundred years ago. And perhaps the feeling was further increased after the arrival of Francis Asbury when he insisted that they move out from New York and Philadelphia into the risks of the wider frontiers.

Let us notice for a moment the nature of the ministry they were sent to represent. It was born out of the conviction that the ministry had lost its force, and the ministers called. Methodists were dedicated to restore its vitality and effectiveness. There were three convictions which characterized them:

(1) The clergy was called to preach—to communicate the gospel. There is no doubt of their dedication to the priestly and pastoral functions, but they could never be substitutes for preaching.

(2) The vocation of preaching is a response to the act of God in bestowing the call to preach. It is the personal presence of the Holy Spirit that assures the power to preach effectively. The inward call to preach characterizes the Wesleyan understanding of the ministry. This emphasis has persisted until this day for every person who is to be ordained a Deacon must answer the question: "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon you the office of the ministry of the church of Christ, to serve God for the promoting of his glory and the edification of his people?"

(3) The ministry carries with it an unyielding sense of urgency—a sense of compulsion. Each day is the day of salvation. They felt called upon to participate zealously in the renewal of the church.

John Wesley emphasized, however, that preaching "Dare not be separated from the societies with the parish." In his Journal of March 12, 1743, he wrote: "I am more and more convinced that the devil himself desires nothing more than this, that the people of any place should be half awakened and then left to themselves to fall asleep again. Therefore, I determine, by the grace of God, not to strike one blow in any one place where I cannot follow the blow." The Wesleyan preacher was required to organize societies, for life in the societies was considered mandatory to the call to

preach. The call of the Holy Spirit, according to Wesley, lays hold upon ordained and lay members of the church, including lay women.

Mr. Wesley also laid great emphasis on social concerns. In an address to the United Societies, at a conference in London in the 1740's, he reported the destitute conditions of many of the people and admonished the societies

- (1) "To bring what clothes each can spare, to be distributed among those that wanted most."
- (2) "To give . . . what they could afford, for the relief of the poor and the sick."

He was not content merely to nurture the members of the society. It was new life for the whole man in the whole world that he so desperately strove to achieve.

While John Wesley envisioned America as a wilderness, he considered the minister to be the trail blazer to the promised land.

Let us turn now to the new wilderness. It is just as true today as it was in the days of Mr. Wesley that the healing balm for a sick world is a church with a competent and committed ministry. In the opening chapter of his book, *THE RENEWAL OF THE MINISTRY*, Thomas J. Mullen writes:

"The Protestant ministry is sick. There is not likely to be a renewal of the Christian Church without a vital ministry, but the trouble is that the ministry, which should be a cure for the lethargy and confusion which plagues the church, itself resembles the disease."

Dr. Mullen commits here the common error of universalizing in such a way that he leaves no room for the dedicated and committed ministers who do not resemble the disease, who represent the hope and strength of our church. They are in every annual conference kindling the fires of the faith and keeping hope alive. Having said this, however, we cannot ignore the essential truth in what he is saying, namely, that the quality and commitment of the ministry determine to a large degree the extent of the renewal of the church.

If the church is to fulfill its ministry through qualified ministers, it must re-examine the nature of the ministry for our times. What is it that young men and women are being called to? Eager and idealistic young people want to change the world, or at least help change it, for the better. Dr.

Mullen states the case succinctly when he says: "A ministry in which prophets boldly make their witness, proclaiming fearlessly 'Thus saith the Lord . . .,' preaching Truth, Justice, and evils of society—this kind of ministry is a cure for the sickness of the church and for itself. However, this kind of ministry is infrequently observed in the Christian churches today. . . . The reformer only reforms when his words and his deeds are specific and objective. When the pastor preaches against general and vague impersonal enemies, his message loses its reality. Chances are the alert and dedicated young men of our day will be repelled by this sight. They will be repelled, not because they think there are no such forces of evil in the world, but because they think there are." Such young people may conclude that the place to fight the evil is somewhere else.

But let us not be overwhelmed by what might appear to be a note of pessimism, for many young people of quality and conscience are entering the ministry who possibly heard the call first through the message and example of a committed minister. The need for an increasing number of these young men and women has never been greater than now. Yet we must never succumb to the temptation to substitute quantity for quality, for quantity without quality is the road to disillusionment and not the promised land.

There is the temptation to resolve the problem by lowering the standards of admission into our annual conferences. This point of view must be vigorously rejected if Methodism is to fulfill its mission within the spirit and tradition of Mr. Wesley. While he believed firmly that God calls men and women as lay pastors, he never relinquished the necessity of the fully ordained clergy being persons of theological competence, since they are predominantly responsible for the leadership of the church. It was for this reason that he asked for professionally trained members of the conference to volunteer to go to America.

In the words of William Adams Brown, "We owe it to ourselves; we owe it to our fellow men . . . to learn all that we can learn that we may be able to do all that we can do."

I want to pay tribute to the lay preacher both in the days of John Wesley and in ours. In fact, early Methodism in America was a lay movement, and it was the lay preacher who kept the flames alive. These lay preachers still occupy a significant place particularly in the State of New Jersey, and on this day I salute them. Yet we must never minimize the need for men and women who can go all the way in professional training in answer to the call in these difficult days.

In the new wilderness of America made increasingly complicated by

the desperate need for young volunteers to lead the flagging church in our day—men of vision, creativity, social concerns, and above all, men who are led by the Holy Spirit, who in turn will lead the church into the Promised Land.

Although the wilderness is dark and the land of hope and promise is not even in view, God calls us to a life of faithfulness and trust.



## A GIANT LEAP FOR METHODISM

(An historical address prepared for the bicentennial of the arrival of Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman in America. A synopsis of this address was presented at the Bicentennial Banquet, October 24, 1969)

October, 1969

by  
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Church History is the story of how witnesses in every age have spread the Good News of God's Redeeming Love in Jesus Christ. Tonight we meet to observe the bicentennial of the coming of these witnesses to Colonial America. Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman belong to that endless line of splendor which has established the Christian Church "throughout the whole wide earth."

The meeting of the first two officially appointed Methodist preachers to America with the Methodists in the New World was indeed a dramatic moment. The time was late October, 1769. Pilmore and Boardman, tired after their strenuous nine-weeks' voyage from London to Gloucester Point, New Jersey, were resting briefly in the home of Captain Sparks in Philadelphia, before proceeding to New York to be with the Methodists there, in response to whose appeal they had been sent to the New World. Captain Sparks had been their genial host aboard the "Mary and Elizabeth" at sea and now his generosity was just as bountiful on shore.

During what was intended to be but a hurried visit in Philadelphia, Pilmore and Boardman were walking along one of the city streets when they were accosted providentially by a Methodist who had immigrated from Ireland and who had known Boardman there. He informed them that the Methodists in Philadelphia had already heard of their arrival and that he was out looking for them. At once Pilmore and Boardman were introduced to the Methodists in Philadelphia, and the next day Boardman preached to the Methodist Society which was meeting in Loxley Court. From then on both Philadelphia and New York were to figure prominently in the official establishment of Methodism in the New World.

When you see these two men three thousand miles from home, in a

strange new world, a raw world in the making, you immediately ask what was responsible for their being there, what were the influences that led them to such a providential moment. Walter Russell Bowie in his recent sobering yet inspiring autobiography *LEARNING TO LIVE* reminds us that the true meaning of life is to be found in its relationships and the influences of those relationships upon a person. He writes: "Each one of us is what he is because of the influences from many other lives which have flowed into him. . . . The relationships which any of us have had with those we know and love are what make life meaningful at last."<sup>1</sup>

What were some of the influences responsible for Pilmore and Boardman being in the New World? First of all, there was the influence of home and family.

Joseph Pilmore was born on October 31, 1739, in the village of Tadmouth, Yorkshire, England. Although little is known about his parental background we do know that his parents were members of the Church of England, and that they were "persons of respectability."<sup>2</sup>

The solitary reference to his parents made by Pilmore in his *JOURNAL* shows them to have been people of piety and Christian devotion. He spoke of his mother as much resigned to God's will in his appointment to America as a Methodist missionary. During his stay at his father's house he writes that he was permitted to preach "at our own door in the street to a very large congregation."<sup>3</sup>

Scarcely any reference to the early life of Richard Boardman has been discovered. He was born in 1738. Tradition says that his birthplace was in Gillimoor. Even though there are no known facts to document it we may surmise that at least the nominal influences of the Christian Faith were not lacking in his boyhood. Perhaps, as in the case of Pilmore, both piety and respectability characterized his early home.

Of major significance in the lives of Pilmore and Boardman was the influence of the Wesleyan Revival. At the age of sixteen Pilmore became acquainted with John Wesley. Under Wesley's influence he was converted and guided into Methodist work. He was educated at Wesley's Kingswood School near Bristol, where he acquired a fair amount of English literature, as well as some knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He remained at the school for three or four years, acquiring a taste for books and mental

improvement. Pilmore has been spoken of as "the most educated of Wesley's early missionaries."<sup>4</sup>

On August 20, 1765, Pilmore was admitted on trial into the Methodist Conference in England. The following year he was admitted into full membership and assigned to the East Cornwall Circuit, which consisted of 580 members. In 1767, at the Conference when Francis Asbury was admitted on trial, Pilmore was stationed in Wales over a circuit which numbered 232 Methodists. He was reappointed to Wales in 1768.

There is no narrative of Richard Boardman's conversion. It could have been at a later age than Pilmore's because Boardman did not enter the ministry until the age of twenty-five. In view of the fact that he entered the Methodist ministry it is to be assumed that both his conversion and call to preach were under Wesleyan influences.

Boardman, who entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1763, travelled successively on the Grimsby, Limerick, Cork, York, and Dales circuits. The two years spent on the York and Dales circuits (1767, 1768) were a period of strenuous ministerial labors. Serving within the counties of Yorkshire, Cumberland and Westmoreland Boardman travelled through the lofty mountain areas and was compelled time and again to thread his way through the numerous ravines which intersect these counties.

Personal spiritual experiences, likewise, played important roles in the lives and ministries of Pilmore and Boardman. These were significant evidences of the life of God in their souls. A dramatic illustration of this is seen in the covenant which Pilmore made with God during his ministry in Wales. The covenant made at Pembroke, Wales, in 1768, was three-fold:

"1. I give up and devote my soul to Thee, O my God, to be altogether and forever Thine. . . . 2. I offer up my body to be forever Thine. . . . 3. I promise to spend all my time in Thy service, and all my talents to Thy glory and honour. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

Prominent in all these influences upon Pilmore and Boardman is the Divine Plan for the New World. Christian History has been described as "the march begun by Twelve Men" across the centuries and throughout the world. When the Great Commission of Jesus Christ spoke about "the uttermost part of the earth" the New World was certainly in the Divine Mind. Just as

<sup>1</sup> Bowie, Walter Russell, *LEARNING TO LIVE*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1969. p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Richard D. Hall, writing in the *ANALS OF THE AMERICAN PULPIT*, Sprague, W. B. (ed). New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1859, VOL. V, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> Pilmore, Joseph, *JOURNAL*. Introductory section (undated).

<sup>4</sup> Duren, William W., *FRANCIS ASBURY*. New York: Macmillan, 1928. p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> For complete copy of the covenant see Pilmore, Joseph, *NARRATIVE OF LABOURS IN SOUTH WALES . . . IN THE YEARS 1767 AND 8*. Philadelphia: Wm. Staveland, 1825. pp. 105, 106.

God had sent emissaries to Europe and to England so He planned for the evangelization of a new continent. The same Divine influences that compelled men to cross the unknown Atlantic likewise sent them westward across America with the great tides of emigration. We must ever keep in mind the master strategies of the Great General of the Army of the Adventurers as He continually sends His witnesses to every opening frontier throughout the world.

Nor should we forget God's dealings with Pilmore and Boardman personally. Struggles within the soul of a child of God always become avenues of Divine revelation. Such Divine encounters influenced greatly these Methodist pioneers.

At the Methodist Conference which met in Bristol on August 16, 1768, Mr. Wesley presented the matter of sending preachers to America. Definite action was postponed for one year. During the ensuing year Pilmore was increasingly impressed by the proposal. He tells in his JOURNAL how he considered and reconsidered the matter repeatedly. He writes:

I was frequently under great exercise of mind respecting the dear Americans and found a willingness to sacrifice everything for their sakes. . . . A sense of duty so affected my mind, and my heart was drawn out with such longing desires for the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom that I was made perfectly willing to forsake my kindred and native land, with all that was most near and dear to me on earth that I might spread abroad the honors of His glorious Name.<sup>6</sup>

A year later, after volunteering to go to America, Pilmore experienced another severe soul struggle. He describes it in these words:

Of all the temptations I had ever met with, this was by far the sharpest, my whole soul was filled with anguish—the deep waters went over me, and the enemy ready to triumph. In this distress I called upon God. . . . He graciously condescended to hear my voice and sent me help from His holy habitation.<sup>7</sup>

At this same time Boardman was experiencing deep sorrow in his heart and life. His daughter Mary died on January 22, 1769. Five days later his wife Olive died. We are told that a Jacob Rowell preached Mrs. Boardman's funeral sermon. Thus it was in the midst of the grief of a double bereavement that Boardman responded to the Divine call to go to America.

So, as we see Pilmore and Boardman in the New World we realize that

<sup>6</sup> Pilmore, Joseph, JOURNAL. Introductory section (undated).

<sup>7</sup> IBID.

they were there by Divine appointment. All the influences of their lives pointed to that climactic moment when in response to the inner Voice, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" each of them gladly answered "Here am I; send me."

The facts surrounding Pilmore and Boardman's ministerial appointment to America are well known. Thomas Taylor of the New York Society had sent a powerful appeal in a letter to Wesley to send able ministers to America. This appeal was reiterated by Philip Embury and Thomas Webb. It was one year after this matter was first mentioned, that at the Conference at Leeds which met on August 1, 1769, Pilmore and Boardman volunteered to go.

An interesting incident is preserved from the ministry of Boardman during the days between his appointment to America and his departure from England. A young woman named Mary Redfern went to hear the "missionary Boardman" preach in a small village called Moneyash in Derbyshire. His text was the prayer of Jabez: "O that thou wouldest enlarge my coast. . . ." At the service this young woman was spiritually awakened. Ten years later, after her marriage to William Bunting, and when she became a mother, she named her first-born Jabez. He became Jabez Bunting, the colossus of Wesleyan Methodism in his day.

On August 21, 1769 Pilmore and Boardman left England on the ship "Mary and Elizabeth." The time of their departure was a prophetic moment in history. Napoleon was a baby. Watts was perfecting the steam engine. George Whitfield was soon to begin his last evangelistic journey in America.

The financial arrangements for this trip to America are noteworthy. An offering of seventy pounds had been taken at the Leeds Conference. Fifty pounds were to be applied to the debt of the New York Society. Only twenty pounds were used for the sea passage of Pilmore and Boardman. This means that actually it cost British Methodism only one hundred dollars to establish its official presence in the New World.

The departure of Pilmore and Boardman from England was significant for Christian missions. They were among the first English missionaries to venture upon stormy seas to seek a foreign shore. The SCHAFF-HERZOG ENCYCLOPEDIA declares that "the great religious revival starting with the labors of the Wesleys and Whitefield gave the impulse to modern missions."

The voyage across the Atlantic Ocean took nine weeks. Contrast this



with the five-day journey of a modern ocean liner or a five-hour trip of a modern jet.

While at sea a terrible storm was encountered. Both Pilmore and Boardman remained tranquil in mind and heart. Pilmore wrote of this experience during the voyage:

We had a most fearful storm. It began about seven o'clock in the morning, and continued till the next day. . . . I had often been told of the sea running mountains high but could never form any idea of it till now. The dreadful surges came rolling; and roaring with such fury, that it seemed utterly impossible for the ship to live or keep above water. . . . In the morning when I went on deck and saw the danger we were in instantly my heart filled with the pure love of God, and all fear of death and hell was entirely taken away. I had not the shadow of a doubt of my acceptance, but was fully assured if I died then I should be eternally happy with God in the Kingdom of heaven—and this continued all day nor did it ever forsake me during the storm. Of all the happy days of my life this was by far the most happy and was a great comfort to me during the rest of the voyage. . . . O grace, free grace, how much I am indebted". . . .<sup>8</sup>

Boardman gave a similar testimony of confident trust in God in the midst of the storm. In a letter to Mr. Wesley, written after the voyage, he declared:

In rough, stormy weather, particularly when it appeared impossible the vessel should live long amid the conflicting elements, I found myself exceedingly happy and rested satisfied that death would be gain. I do not remember to have had one doubt of being eternally saved, should the mighty waters swallow us up.<sup>9</sup>

Undoubtedly many of us are thinking of a contrasting experience at sea in the annals of Early Methodism. John Wesley, during the storms on his voyage to America in the winter of 1736 reacted in quite the opposite manner from Pilmore and Boardman. During one of the storms Wesley described his situation in this manner:

About eleven I lay down in the great cabin, and in a short time fell asleep, although very uncertain whether I should wake alive, and much ashamed of my unwillingness to die. Oh, how pure in heart must he be, who would rejoice to appear before God at a moment's warning!<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *IBID.*, Sept. 28, 1769.

<sup>9</sup> Atkinson, John, *THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT IN AMERICA*. New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1896. p. 129.

<sup>10</sup> *THE JOURNAL OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.* Standard Edition, Curnack, Nehemiah (ed). 8 Vols. New York: Eaton & Mains, n.d. January 17, 1736.

It was during a third storm at sea that Wesley was personally convicted by his lack of faith because of the poise of the Moravian Christians on board the ship. He writes: "I asked one of them afterwards, 'Was you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, No.' I asked, 'But were not your women and children afraid?' He replied mildly, 'No; our women and children are not afraid to die.'"<sup>11</sup>

May I digress for a moment from the historical format of this paper for the purpose of doing a bit of "preaching?" Can it not be said with confidence that Aldersgate made a difference in John Wesley's life? Among other things it made a mighty difference in his reaction to the "stormy circumstances" of every day life. Before Aldersgate, in the storm at sea—fearful, anxious, lacking confidence, afraid to die—but after Aldersgate, a man of poise and confidence and courage. After Aldersgate see him in the midst of jeering and assaulting mobs. Watch his reactions through the grace of Christ.

Wesley tells of his experiences with the rioting mob at Wednesbury:

They dragged me along till we came to the town; where, seeing the door of a large house open, I attempted to go in; but a man, catching me by the hair, pulled me back into the middle of the mob. . . . I continued speaking all the time to those within hearing, feeling no pain or weariness. . . . From the beginning to the end I found the same presence of mind, as if I had been sitting in my own study.<sup>12</sup>

Aldersgate made a difference in Wesley's life. Aldersgate has always made a difference wherever the people called Methodists have experienced it. Companies of the Upper Room have ever gone forth transformed and transforming. Aldersgate will make a difference in the lives of contemporary Methodists if we will only experience it. One of our follies is that we spend too much time trying to explain what we think happened to John Wesley on Aldersgate Street. Rather ought we be giving ourselves so completely to God that Aldersgate can happen over again in us.

Actually Pilmore and Boardman were Methodist itinerants in America for only a short time. They arrived in October 1769 and left in January 1774. They were here during a period of only fifty months. But their "small step" on American soil proved to be a "giant leap" for the Christianizing of mankind in the New World. When they arrived in America it was a single Methodist Circuit. The British Conference Minutes of 1770 record America as "Circuit No. 50." Think of it—a whole continent one Methodist

<sup>11</sup> *IBID.* January 25, 1736.

<sup>12</sup> *IBID.* October 20, 1743.

circuit. What a phenomenal contrast American Methodism offers today.

In America Boardman was Pilmore's ecclesiastical superior in the field, serving as Wesley's assistant until October 1772 when Francis Asbury was appointed by Wesley. It was Boardman therefore who determined the frequency of the pastoral exchanges between himself and Pilmore and set the dates for them.

Boardman spent most of his ministry in New York and Philadelphia. He and Pilmore agreed to change places every four months. In those days Philadelphia was a city of 30,000 inhabitants and the population of New York was 20,000. In May 1772 Boardman traveled to Providence and Boston. He introduced Methodism into New England one year before the first American Methodist Conference and eleven years before Jesse Lee entered the traveling connection.

Boardman was greatly moved by the spiritual hunger of the Americans. On November 4, 1769, he wrote to Wesley saying that the people were so desirous of hearing the Word of the Lord that only a third of them could get into the preaching house. In a letter to Wesley dated April 23, 1771, Boardman gave an account of a "blessed revival" in New York in which many were converted.

During Boardman's ministry in New York John Mann was called into the Gospel ministry. It was Mann who later together with Freeborn Garrettson and William Black sowed the first Gospel seed in Nova Scotia.

In addition to Pilmore's ministries in Philadelphia and New York, he made an extensive evangelistic tour of eleven hundred miles into the Southern Colonies, beginning in May 1772 and ending thirteen months later.

Pilmore traveled first through the German counties of Pennsylvania. Here he met Henry M. Muhlenberg, the Lutheran leader, for whom he almost instinctively developed a warm affection.

Pilmore then proceeded into the northern counties of Maryland. Here he was impressed with the significant Methodist work which Robert Strawbridge, Robert Williams, and John King were doing. Pilmore preached frequently. Robert Williams seems to have been Pilmore's companion during much of the time he was in rural Maryland.

On June 11, 1772, Pilmore and Williams arrived in Baltimore. Baltimore was then a town of a few more than five thousand inhabitants. As far as can be ascertained Pilmore was the first preacher officially appointed by

Wesley to America who preached in that city. During this time Pilmore formed two Methodist Societies, one in Baltimore proper and one at the Point, one mile from Baltimore proper.

After eleven days Pilmore returned to the northern counties of Maryland to revisit the Methodist Societies. Then after returning to Baltimore he went to Annapolis. Although a total stranger in Annapolis Pilmore sent the bell-man around the town to inform the inhabitants that there would be preaching that evening at seven o'clock. A large congregation gathered to hear him.

From Annapolis Pilmore sailed to Norfolk. He remained in the Norfolk-Portsmouth vicinity for approximately five months. Using Norfolk and Portsmouth as centers to which he returned frequently Pilmore went on brief preaching trips to places as distant as Williamsburg and Yorktown. He formed Methodist Societies in both Norfolk and Portsmouth.

In December 1772, Pilmore journeyed into North Carolina. As he traveled there he became aware of the unparalleled opportunities open to the Christian evangelist in these places. He did not find a minister in the first five counties through which he passed. He visited Edenton, New Bern, and Wilmington. He had an excellent, but brief ministry in each of these places.

On January 6, 1773 Pilmore set out for Charles Town in the province of South Carolina. The journey through South Carolina was the most difficult that Pilmore had thus far experienced in his life. In Charles Town he became very friendly with the Rev. Oliver Hart, a Baptist minister. Mr. Hart was a "particular" Baptist. There were also "general" Baptists in town. Pilmore availed himself of numerous opportunities to preach to both groups.

On February 1st Pilmore left for Savannah, Georgia, where he remained only eleven days. During his stay there he journeyed, in the company of a young lawyer from Boston, twelve miles from the city to visit Whitefield's Orphan House. Even though the country was extremely barren Pilmore was pleased with the Orphan House.

Pilmore began his return journey northward on February 15, 1773. He followed the same route northward as he had taken on the journey southward, revisiting the places where he had already preached. He arrived back in Philadelphia in June 1773.

It should be noted that both Pilmore and Boardman lived in the first Methodist parsonage in America furnished by the New York Society on

John Street. They were also the beneficiaries of a library provided for ministers by the same Society.

Pilmore and Boardman were present at the first American Methodist Conference which met in St. George's Church, Philadelphia, July 14-16, 1773. But neither was given a pastoral assignment at this Conference.

Within a matter of a few months Pilmore and Boardman were to return to England. The suggestion for the return to England seems to have originated with Boardman. The motivation for Boardman's decision is usually connected with the approaching War of the Revolution and the uncertain, foreboding years just ahead. But the reason may have been deeper than this. After all Boardman had been supplanted by others in ecclesiastical authority, by the direction of Mr. Wesley. And Boardman's health was not good.

At first Pilmore was hesitant to accede to Boardman's request to return to England with him. For two weeks Pilmore remained in the valley of indecision. It was not until after his return to Philadelphia that he made his decision to accompany Boardman on the trip back to England.

Certainly Pilmore's decision is another evidence of the warm friendship which existed between him and Boardman. This friendship formed during the early years of Christian ministry was strengthened and intensified by the experiences of Divine Grace and by their association in the sacred vocation of their lives.

Pilmore and Boardman sailed from New York for England on January 2, 1774. Neither would ever return as a Methodist itinerant. And Boardman would never return.

What were the contributions of Pilmore and Boardman to American Methodism? Atkinson writes: "But for their presence here from the fall of 1769 until the beginning of 1774 the history of Methodism in this country might have been different from what it is."<sup>13</sup>

In general it can be said that Pilmore and Boardman began to create the unity so necessary for a new church in a New World. Thus when Pilmore and Boardman entered upon their American labors a new era began in Methodism.

Frederick E. Maser, in an address delivered at the meeting of the South-

<sup>13</sup> Atkinson, John, THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT IN AMERICA. p. 449.

eastern Jurisdictional Historical Society at Lake Junaluska in July, 1961, spoke of the significance of this aspect of Pilmore and Boardman's American ministry. These two men began to draw together under the rule of John Wesley the scattered Methodist Societies in America. Methodism in America had its beginning in various scattered places and states. But the important thing is not where Methodism began in America, but how all those scattered beginnings were brought together into a Methodist unity under John Wesley. Why did they not remain as fragments or as slowly developing groups completely separated from one another in policy and government? Even though the names of Rankin and Asbury loom large in the answer to this question it was Pilmore and Boardman who had laid the foundations of this unity by their sound judgment, their effective ministries and their broad contacts with their Methodist brethren.

Atkinson summarizes this aspect of Pilmore and Boardman's contribution to American Methodism in this manner:

They cleared a path for Methodism's march to its vast continental conquests before the military tempest burst upon the Colonies. The training and propulsion which they gave to it prepared it in a degree under God to abide and to surmount the long and severe revolutionary ordeal.<sup>14</sup>

Maldwyn Edwards, in a bicentennial article in "The Methodist Recorder" writes: "Pilmore and Boardman started the work which Francis Asbury was able to sustain and develop. They helped lay the foundations of Methodism in the New World."<sup>15</sup>

Speaking more specifically the contributions of Pilmore and Boardman to American Methodism may be discussed under at least three headings. First they made a tremendous contribution to evangelism.

Both Pilmore and Boardman were ardent evangelists, men of flaming evangelistic passion and zeal. We are told that Pilmore was ignited early by the evangelistic flame of the Gospel. As a youth even before his appointed ministry, after a hard day's agricultural toil he would walk, sometimes many miles, into adjacent villages and hamlets to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ to the scattered population.

Pilmore's long ministry revealed him to be a man of intense evangelistic concern. His zeal was not the transient flash of the eccentric meteor or the sudden glare of lightning. Evangelism was the spirit of his life and ministry

<sup>14</sup> IBID. p. 190.

<sup>15</sup> "The Methodist Recorder," July 3, 1969.

that continued to motivate him amid the pressures of his herculean labours, even to extreme old age.

Throughout his ministry Pilmore sensed an inner call to be an evangelist. Repeatedly in his JOURNAL he gives evidence of this. Often he wrote like this:

O how gladly would I spend all my days with such dear children of God, but my call is to prepare the way of the Lord by calling sinners to repentance.<sup>16</sup>

I love much to converse with people of good sense and pleasing address, but my call is to go forward, and preach the Gospel to the poor.<sup>17</sup>

My call is to run to and from that knowledge may be increased and God exalted in the earth.<sup>18</sup>

My call . . . is to travel through the waste places of the wilderness, and call sinners to repent and turn to the Lord.<sup>19</sup>

Boardman was just as ardent a Christian evangelist. He was unusually effective in the evangelistic task. He gave himself unreservedly to evangelism, in spite of poor health which plagued him at times. His soul was thrilled whenever there was any evidence of a spiritual awakening. He reported to Mr. Wesley all such spiritual events. One such report was in April 1771, when he wrote to Wesley: "It pleases God to carry on his work among us. Within this month we have had a great awakening here."

On the eve of the first American Methodist Conference Boardman preached an excellent sermon on the important work of the Gospel ministry in Philadelphia.<sup>20</sup> What a significant keynote for an annual conference!

When one looks more closely at the evangelistic ministries of Pilmore and Boardman one recognizes at least three component features: (1) enthusiastic and contagious personalities, (2) the simplicity of the Gospel, (3) a sensitivity to opportunity.

Pilmore and Boardman were Christian men of zeal. This was the inevitable result of their personal spiritual relationship to Jesus Christ. Christ was alive within them. It was imperative that each make Christ known to others.

Every great spiritual movement of the Christian centuries has been

<sup>16</sup> Pilmore, Joseph, JOURNAL. May 28, 1772.

<sup>17</sup> IBID. July 1, 1772.

<sup>18</sup> IBID. February 14, 1773.

<sup>19</sup> IBID. March 25, 1773.

<sup>20</sup> IBID. July 13, 1773.

propelled by zeal. What about the evangelistic zeal of the Church today? Is the contemporary Christian really aflame with Jesus Christ and His redeeming love?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ in all of its simplicity was at the heart of the evangelism of Pilmore and Boardman. Even though they had theological convictions that brought assurance and gave direction they were not primarily systematic theologians. Consequently they did not offer people a book of theology for their assent or rejection. Rather they preached Jesus Christ. But the simplicity of the Gospel was expressed through basic theological convictions: God speaks through His Word; God forgives and reconciles and cleanses through Jesus Christ; God is continually working through the Holy Spirit.

Evangelism to Pilmore and Boardman meant bringing men to a personal encounter with the Redeemer. In this encounter God makes the offer of grace; and in this same encounter the evangelist passionately exhorts man to receive God's gift.

Pilmore and Boardman were sensitive to every opportunity for evangelistic work. Their entire lives and ministries revealed this. They were evangelists before they volunteered to come to America, utilizing every opportunity to lead men to Christ in their homeland. They were acutely sensitive to evangelistic opportunities in America. They preached whenever and wherever there was an opportunity to preach. Their evangelistic tours were significant. They, likewise, used every known means of evangelism. The long ministry of Pilmore both as a Methodist, and an Episcopalian in particular, reveals the great use he made of education as an opportunity for evangelism.

Here, then, were two evangelists set loose in the world under Methodist auspices. They were at the front of an endless army of Methodist evangelists in the New World. They were helping Mr. Wesley make the world his parish.

A second specific contribution of Pilmore and Boardman to American Methodism was their interest in and concern for effective church administration. They desired an effective oversight of the ministers. One year before the first American Methodist Conference Boardman met with the preachers and laid out plans for pastoral assignments. Francis Asbury later called this the "Boardman Plan."

Pilmore and Boardman were also interested in the disciplined administration of the local Methodist Societies. They were men of order and method. As early as November 1, 1769 Boardman entered into a pastoral agreement with the officials of the New York Society. Each preacher after laboring

three months in New York, was to receive three guineas, to provide himself with wearing apparel. Evidently the preacher's board was provided in some other way. The agreement also stipulated that there was to be preaching on Sunday morning and evening, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and that the preacher was to meet the Society every Wednesday evening.

Here is an interesting sidelight of the agreement just mentioned. Each preacher was allowed one quire of writing paper for every quarter. Only four quires of paper a year certainly meant no circumlocution in the writing of sermons. Such economy commends itself to the contemporary situation, does it not?

Boardman and Pilmore met with the local Societies quarterly. Undoubtedly this quarterly meeting had something to do with the financial stipend for the preachers which was called the "quarterage." It has been suggested that this meeting may have been the forerunner of the Quarterly Conference in American Methodism. And does this quarterly meeting reveal anything of Pilmore and Boardman's desire for lay participation in the governance of the local Society?

It is unfair to level charges of administrative unconcern and inefficiency against Pilmore and Boardman even though this was done many times by their contemporaries. Their administrative activities prove their critics wrong for the most part. The difference was to be seen in the spirit and method of their administration. Pilmore and Boardman tried never to lose the pastor's heart in the administration of church discipline. Perhaps they were ahead of their time in this. Undoubtedly it took the rigid disciplinarianism of a Francis Asbury in THOSE days.

There is a third specific contribution of Pilmore and Boardman to American Methodism. They were deeply concerned about ministerial competence in relation to the mind and studies. Pilmore expressed this joint conviction when he declared: "Nor is there any necessary connection between mental incompetence and evangelical fervour and success. The faithful servant of the Lord is one who studies to show himself approved unto God."

Pilmore and Boardman believed in the marriage of piety and scholarship. They believed in an educated mind, not exclusive of, but in vital relationship to a converted heart. Salvation involves the whole man; it includes the saving of the intellect from ignorance as well as the saving of the soul from irreverence.

Pilmore and Boardman were faithful students. In spite of almost incessant activities frequent journeys and innumerable hardships they devoted

every possible moment to studies and by their very example they were strong advocates of an adequate education for preachers. The minister must study if he is to have "wisdom for his portion." But the minister's motive for study must be spiritual. No study is worthwhile unless it be ultimately for the glory of God and the service of mankind.

Only a brief ministry of fifty months in America—"a small step" as far as the calendar is concerned. But it was a "giant leap" for American Methodism. We continue to reap the influences of these early contributions of Pilmore and Boardman in evangelism church administration and concern for ministerial competence.

Pilmore and Boardman were back in England by the early spring of 1774. The Methodist Conference met in Bristol on August 9. Boardman was assigned to Londonderry, being reappointed the following year. He was transferred to Cork in 1776 and served there for two years. His name does not appear in the Minutes of the 1778 British Conference. In 1779 he was assigned to Limerick. In 1780 he was stationed in London, with Thomas Coke, Joseph Brandford, and John Charles Wesley. In 1781 he was back in Limerick and his pastoral appointment was Cork the following year.

Boardman died suddenly in Cork, on October 4, 1782, at the age of forty-four. The Sunday before his death he preached on the text—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." He was buried in Cork, and his plain tombstone bears this inscription under his name and the date of his death:

Beneath this stone the dust of Boardman lies,  
His precious soul has soar'd above the skies;  
With eloquence Divine he preach'd the word  
To multitudes, and turn'd them to the Lord.  
His bright examples strengthen'd what he taught,  
And devils trembled when for Christ he fought;  
With truly Christian zeal he nations fired,  
And all who knew him mourn'd when he expired.

His death is recorded in the 1783 British Conference Minutes. Wesley's obituary remarks spoke of Boardman as "a pious, good-natured, sensible man, greatly beloved of all who knew him." It is believed that Boardman had been remarried about thirteen months before his death and that he was survived by both a widow and infant son.

In the life of Joseph Pilmore the years from 1774 to 1784 may be spoken of as the "silent years." In the British Conference Minutes of 1774 his name is included among those who "desist from travelling." Nor was there any appointment for Pilmore at the 1775 Conference. His name is

missing from those who signed the "Ministerial Agreement" at the 1775 Conference.

In August 1776 Pilmore was stationed in London. At the Conference in Bristol, August 5, 1777, Pilmore was appointed to the Norwich Circuit, and reappointed the following year.

In 1779 Pilmore was appointed to Edinburgh with Barnabas Thomas and Benjamin Rhodes. In 1780 Pilmore and Barnabas Thomas were stationed at Dublin.

Pilmore was reappointed to Dublin at the Conference which met in 1781. A letter from John Wesley to Samuel Mitchell under date of April 6, 1783, reveals that Wesley considered Pilmore his Assistant in Dublin at the time.<sup>21</sup> In 1782 Pilmore was appointed to Nottingham.

The MINUTES of the Conference which opened at Bristol on July 29, 1783, record the death of Richard Boardman. At the same Conference Joseph Pilmore and Andrew Inglis were appointed to Edinburgh.

The last time that Pilmore's name appears in the British Methodist MINUTES is in the record of the Conference at Leeds, which opened on July 27, 1784. At this Conference Pilmore was stationed at York, together with Alexander Mather and Robert Hopkins.

There now begins a strange and significant chapter in the life and ministry of Joseph Pilmore. The next official record of Pilmore after the Methodist Conference at Leeds in 1784 finds him back in America, where on November 27, 1785, he was ordained a Deacon in the Protestant Episcopal Church, by Bishop Samuel Seabury, Jr., somewhere in Connecticut, and he was advanced to the Priesthood two days later by the same bishop.

It is not the purpose of this address to discuss the reasons for Pilmore's withdrawal from the Methodists. Many historical statements can be made in this regard and many inferences deduced. Perhaps we will never know the deepest reason, or even all the contributing factors. (This subject is dealt with in more detail in the Biographical Sketch to the published JOURNAL of Pilmore). I continue to react as I did as the result of my earlier intensive study of Pilmore:

This is a strange, yet significant chapter in the life of Joseph Pilmore. It reveals the mysterious trend of circumstances in human

<sup>21</sup> THE LETTERS OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M. Telford, John (ed). London: Epworth Press, 1931. VOL. VII, p. 119.

lives. It is another illustration of the weaknesses of human personalities. It is the 'Paul and Barnabas episode' of Early Methodism.<sup>22</sup>

At least two things need to be kept in mind as we evaluate Pilmore's withdrawal from the Methodists. First of all even though withdrawing from the Methodists he never turned his back upon them. He retained his love for Methodist preachers and Methodist people. He continued friendly with the Methodist body and he always manifested the evangelical and evangelistic emphases of Methodism. He remained a Methodist in spirit throughout all the years of his ministry.

When Pilmore heard of the death of Wesley in 1791 his heart was greatly saddened. He paid the following tribute to Wesley in a letter which he sent to his ministerial friend the Rev. Mr. Atmore, in England: "For many years I have been pleasing myself with the thought of seeing him again before his departure to Paradise, but I am too late. I always most affectionately loved him, and shall feel a special regard for him even in heaven itself."<sup>23</sup>

At the Methodist Conference in Philadelphia in October, 1796, Pilmore was a guest, and he was cordially received by Bishop Asbury. Asbury invited him to preach, and Pilmore preached upon the theme of "the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." Asbury expressed gratification as hearing "such wholesome talk" from his "plain countryman."<sup>24</sup>

Wakely has preserved the story of an interesting incident in 1804 which shows the love and esteem which Pilmore always had for the Methodists:

Dr. Bangs informed me, that at the first Conference he attended, which was in old John St., in 1804, a tall, fine-looking, dignified old gentleman came into the house and walked to the altar, where Bishop Asbury was sitting. The bishop arose, and shook him by the hand, and then introduced him to the Conference, saying: 'This is Brather Pilmoor who used to preach in this pulpit under the direction of Mr. John Wesley.' Mr. Pilmoor seemed a little embarrassed, and bowed respectfully, and then paid his annual subscription to the preachers' fund, and soon after retired.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Stanger, Frank B., THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE REV. JOSEPH PILMORE, D.D. (Thesis) Temple University Library, Philadelphia, 1942. p. 143.

<sup>23</sup> Lockwood, John P., THE WESTERN PIONEERS. London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1881. p. 197.

<sup>24</sup> THE JOURNAL AND LETTERS OF FRANCIS ASBURY. Clork, Elmer T. (ed). 3 Vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1958. October 10, 1796.

<sup>25</sup> Wakeley, J. B., LOST CHAPTERS RECOVERED FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF AMERICAN METHODISM. New York: J. B. Wakeley, 1858. pp. 217-8.

In 1807, in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Atmore, Pilmore expressed in a very jubilant paragraph the genuine joy afforded him by the knowledge of the rapid progress being made by the Methodists in both England and America:

I am happy to hear, from various quarters, that religion is gloriously prospering in England, and that the Methodists have great success. The vine, long since planted by the venerable Wesley, has spread its branches, and well-nigh filled the land. Blessed be God! Hallelujah! In this country too, where we poor underplanters were employed, the Word has taken a universal spread, and the Methodists bid fair to outnumber most of their neighbors. This is, indeed, the Lord's doing; showing that life and zeal in religion are worth more than all the arts and sciences together. So it was in England, so it is in America, and so it will be in all the earth. 'Even so, Lord Jesus.'<sup>26</sup>

On April 3, 1814, Francis Asbury wrote in his JOURNAL: "Joseph Pilmore is yet alive and preaches three times every Sabbath."

To understand Pilmore truly we must remember also his long and distinguished ministerial service in the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. From 1786 to 1791 he was the Rector of the United Parishes of Trinity, Oxford (now Lawndale, Pa.) All Saints, Lower Dublin (now Torresdale, Pa.) and St. Thomas, Whitemarsh, Pa., all in the vicinity of Philadelphia. From 1789 to 1791 he served, part-time, as assistant minister to the Rev. Samuel Magaw, (Rector of St. Paul's Church, Philadelphia. From 1791 to 1794 he served full-time in this capacity as assistant minister.

From 1794 to 1804 Pilmore was the pastor of the newly-formed Christ Church in New York City. In 1804 he returned to Philadelphia to serve as Rector of St. Paul's Church where he ministered with deep personal dedication and ever-increasing spiritual fruitfulness until his resignation in 1821, in his eighty-second year.

Pilmore was a magnificently effective preacher. He was always an evangelist. His preaching was fervid and impassioned. He continually sought to lead people to make their verdicts for Jesus Christ. He was a man of prayer.

He was a faithful pastor. One of the results of his pastoral interest in people was the gathering of a large circle of young men into the work of the full-time ministry and the lay ministry.

<sup>26</sup> Lockwood, John P., THE WESTERN PIONEERS. pp. 197-8.

He was a methodical administrator and always an educational advocate. He founded the Sunday School at St. Paul's. He supervised a spiritual ministry among the poor and the afflicted.

He was not only an influential leader of his own denomination but also an enthusiastic participant in interdenominational work in Philadelphia.

Pilmore died on July 24, 1825, honored and loved by all to whom he was known. His body is interred in a vault beneath the floor of the Sunday School room of St. Paul's Church, South Third Street, Philadelphia.

The lives and ministries of Pilmore and Boardman are a glorious part of our Methodist heritage. Here were well-poised, discreet, cultured, holy men. They were volunteers. Someone has marked that "one volunteer is worth a dozen pressed men." They put their whole selves into their work. They were preachers of superior talents. Methodists everywhere rise up and call them "blessed."

Tonight we are participating in an historical celebration. We meet on a bicentennial occasion. Two hundred years have passed since Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman first set foot on American soil, just a few miles from here.

What is the message that we need to hear across these two centuries?

Speaking very generally HISTORY itself has a message for us. We need always to have a proper view of history. There are two dangerous extremes: a radical rejection of the past, on the one hand; and the worship of the past, on the other. Neither response is adequate. Somehow we must achieve a combination. Whitehead reminded us that the purpose of history is to inform the present concerning the facts of the past in order to help shape the future.

The late Herbert Welch, Christendom's Senior bishop and Methodism's "grand old man," after he had reached the century mark sent an extremely relevant "communique" to the students of his beloved Drew University. In his message to the contemporary generation, Bishop Welch spoke these timely words:

On every side we are being admonished nowadays to recognize that ours is a new age and that it cries aloud for a new message and new method. Without decrying the new I want to suggest that keeping up to date does not involve throwing out of the window the accumulated wisdom of the centuries. By all means, learn the new



words, read the new thinkers, try the new methods. But they may all prove to be something less than a blessing if they are used as a substitute rather than a supplement to the old.

Bishop F. Gerald Ensley in his baccalaureate sermon to the Class of 1969 at Asbury Theological Seminary reinforced this truth of the inescapable uses of history. Speaking on the topic "The Curse of Being Relevant" Bishop Ensley exposed the folly of much of the current talk about relevance because of its sole preoccupation with the present. Relevance means relatedness and is far broader than relatedness only to the contemporary scene. Said the bishop:

Time has three dimensions—past and future, as well as present. . . . Relevance yesterday, today, and forever, yes, let's be relevant. But let us not forget . . . that we must take the past into account as well as the present. For only the past can speak with certainty what the nature of things is and what is really relevant.

Albert C. Outler one of Methodism's contemporary theologians, speaks in a similar vein:

Even in a revolutionary age, the past is still prelude to the future. What is more, our freedom for that future depends at least partly on our present self-understanding in the light of our traditions and corporate experience since these control our perspectives. In the case of a historical entity like Methodism any realistic look ahead demands a careful retrospect.<sup>27</sup>

So tonight HISTORY has a message for us. We are bidden as we stand at a burning bush set aflame by our historical recollections to remember that history is always holy ground, alive with reverential insights.

Speaking more specifically METHODIST HISTORY has a message for us. Dramatically illustrated in the lives of Pilmore and Boardman is the fact that Methodism is essentially "a movement of the Spirit." Francis G. Peabody, late professor of Christian Morals in Harvard University, reminded his contemporaries that through the centuries there have been two "churches" within Christendom—the church of authority and the church of the Spirit. The Wesleyan Movement has always been a part of the church of the Spirit.

In a recent ecumenical lecture Bishop F. Gerald Ensley speaks of Methodism as an emphasis that became an institution.<sup>28</sup> D. T. Niles writes: "In the New World Methodism provided the form of the church for men living

<sup>27</sup> METHODISM'S DESTINY IN AN ECUMENICAL AGE, Minus, P.M., Jr. (ed). New York: Abingdon, 1969, p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> IBID. p. 80.

on a moving frontier. It showed the marks of a movement rather than an establishment."<sup>29</sup>

Alan Walker describes Methodism as "a mood, an accent, a stance, a spirit, a dynamic driving movement. It reveals its authentic self in mission, primarily and always in mission."<sup>30</sup>

A movement of the Spirit is characterized by objectives that have been inspired by the Holy Spirit and resources that are offered by the Spirit. A movement of the Spirit is propelled by men of the Spirit, men sanctified by Divine Grace, men to whom spiritual religion is vital.

Pilmore and Boardman were men of the Spirit participating in this movement of the Spirit known as Methodism. As men to whom the Christian Faith was vital they were representative of the Methodist Revival as it swept across the British Isles and throughout the New World.

Early Methodists had a consuming sense of God. Look at Pilmore and Boardman. God was a living reality in their lives. The reality of Jesus Christ had been experienced in the conviction of sin, the new life of regeneration and holiness, the witness of the Spirit, the Divine call, the redemptive providences, and the burning hope of eternal life. They demonstrated what has been called the "nonchalance of total consecration." They had given their all to God. Therefore, nothing else mattered. In total response to Christ's call they held the things of this world lightly.

How illuminating are the words of John Atkinson: "The power of the early Methodist preachers was largely heart-power."<sup>31</sup>

Early Methodists also had a compelling sense of mission. The work of the Kingdom of Christ was both a treasured priority and a consuming passion. The early Methodist preachers were men of passion with flaming tongues. The story is told of an early Methodist preacher who called out "fire, fire." A crowd immediately gathered. They asked him "Where?" He said: "The fire of God is burning in my soul." Then he proceeded to preach to the assembled group.

Thomas Coke, on September 24, 1784, wrote: "I seem to want the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the gospel through the East and the West and the North and the South."

<sup>29</sup> IBID. p. 131.

<sup>30</sup> IBID. p. 193.

<sup>31</sup> Atkinson, John, THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT IN AMERICA. p. 239.



Early Methodists were apostolic men with apostolic zeal and apostolic success. They were not afraid of getting into anybody's parish, for they felt that the world was their parish, and the universe their diocese. They were living men whose lips had been touched with a coal from heaven's altar by a living seraphim. They were ministers who watched for souls as those who expected to give an account.

There is no substitute for evangelism. Certainly a movement that began in a spiritual revival and whose every inch of progress across two centuries has been the result of evangelism should have learned this truth well by this time. Recently a leader of the United Methodist Church raised this haunting question: "Why has Methodism with its spiritual versatility and its illimitable resources seemed to have been able to handle only one spiritual emphasis at a time?" He went on to say: "Through the years Methodism has had its major emphasis at one time upon evangelism, then upon religious education, then upon worship, and more recently upon ecumenism and social action. But the record seems to show only one major emphasis at a time."

There is no substitute for evangelism in spite of any other legitimate spiritual emphasis in the life and activity of the church. Pilmore and Boardman and Wesley and Asbury and a host of others are trying to tell us this in our critical times.

Furthermore, early Methodists had a compassionate sense of others. They were totally expendable in the servant-pattern of their lives and ministries.

Early Methodists had a confident sense of adequacy. The refrain in their witness was the sufficiency of the Grace of Jesus Christ. Read again the JOURNALS of Wesley and Pilmore and Asbury. Read again the letters of Boardman and Rankin and Coke. On every page is the joyous witness to the victory of God in their lives in the midst of every circumstance.

These men of the Spirit found their adequacy in the power of the Spirit. The first disciples of Methodism in America had no name, no rank, no material means, many of them little formal scholarship, no worldly power, no human credentials. For the most part Methodism was introduced into the New World by unknown and unheralded immigrants. What, then, gave Methodism its force, its momentum? Unquestionably it was the truth of God and the Spirit of God. But it was truth unembarrassed, unsystematized, truth in its simplicity, truth unctonized by the Spirit.

These men of the Spirit were faithful and steadfast and they persevered

in the midst of the most trying hardships and adverse circumstances. So significant were their victories that a recent historical lecture in England dealing with Methodist preachers between 1744 and 1813 called the period of their ministries "the heroic age" in the history of Methodism.

These greathearts of the past speak a triumphant word to all who minister in the contemporary age. After all this is another of those "heroic ages" in Methodist history. A minister recently reminded seminarians of the need for such contemporary heroism when he wrote to one of them: "The demands upon the pastoral minister in this epoch are the greatest they have ever been. I do not mean the hardships, such as horseback riding, multiple churches, the elements and the weather, etc. I mean the rigors of the 1969 contemporary scene."<sup>32</sup>

Those who celebrate an anniversary in the spiritual realm make of it either a mere MONUMENT to the past or a renewed MOVEMENT of the Spirit for the present and the future. On this significant occasion God wants more than a monument. God is calling us to make this bicentennial anniversary an occasion of spiritual renewal within Methodism.

We must keep in mind Methodism's God-given TASK. No clearer presentation of it has ever been given than in the words of Francis Asbury: "Whither am I going? To the New World. What to do? To gain honor? No, if I know my own heart. To get money? No; I am going to live to God, and to bring others so to do."<sup>33</sup>

We also thank God for Methodism's COMPLETED TASKS across two centuries. We rejoice that God has assigned Methodism such an influential quota in the vast company of witnesses who have offered the Good News of God's Redeeming Love in Jesus Christ across the centuries and throughout the world. We thank God for John Wesley, Knight of the Burning Heart, and for his sons in the Gospel ministry, Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman and all those who have followed them.

We thrill anew as we contemplate THE METHODIST TRAIL IN NEW JERSEY. Our fathers and brothers within the Garden State have been courageous pioneers of faith distinguishing themselves as self-sacrificing circuit riders conscientious pastors, flaming evangelists, patient administrators, enlightened educators, dedicated laymen—all engaged in the glorious enterprise of building the Kingdom of Christ.

<sup>32</sup> From a research paper, "Life and Work of the Minister" class, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1969.

<sup>33</sup> THE JOURNAL AND LETTERS OF FRANCIS ASBURY. Clark, Elmer T. (ed). September 12, 1771.

But we must not forget Methodism's UNFINISHED TASK. We must be more than spectators who view the mighty works of God from somewhere in the left-field bleachers of another century. The stewardship of the Gospel means more than building a museum in which we admire with amazement the wonders of an age that is gone or the miracles of One who lived in a distant once-upon-a-time.

It is ours to spread the Good News today! Methodism when it is true to its genius lives in the present wonder of His salvation. O, may it all our powers engage to do our Master's will, as we serve the present age, our calling to fulfil.

To the Christian the future is always irresistibly challenging. Janet Erskine Stuart, a shining saint of the last generation, says, in a letter to the community of which she was the Mother Superior, that they must be full of hope, "since God will always be better to us than He has been as yet." She continues: "The best things behind us have no proportion with what is still before us."

I desire to close with a call to worship and to service. Could anything be more appropriate on an historical occasion such as this

Why are we here?

We are here to look back . . . and to look ahead.

All life is one as God is one.

The future flows out of the present as the present flows out of the past.

Why are we here?

To be put in our place by the Director of history.

To learn our lines and play them well.

LET THE DRAMA BEGIN.



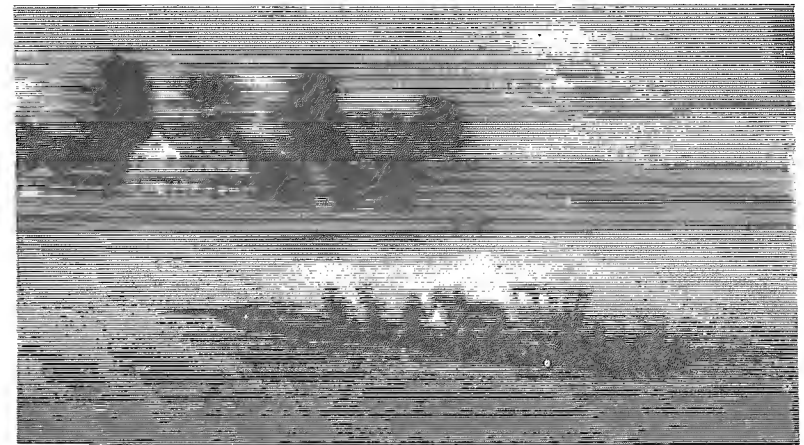
## HISTORIC GLOUCESTER POINT

by  
HARRY F. GREEN

As a contribution to the  
Bicentennial Celebration  
of the Landing of Joseph Pilmore  
and Richard Boardman  
at Gloucester Point, N. J.

October 24-25, 1969

When Gloucester County was first formed in 1686 it included land that today is known as Camden and Atlantic Counties. This vast area covered one-seventh of New Jersey and stretched from the Delaware River to the Atlantic Ocean. "Old Gloucester County," as this area is referred to by present-day historians continued to claim this territory for over one hundred and fifty years after its founding. The county seat was Gloucester Town (the present Gloucester City of Camden County) for the first hundred years. It was located on a portion of land that extended prominently into the Delaware River, between Timber Creek on the south and Newton Creek on the north.



HUGGS TAVERN BUILT ON GLOUCESTER POINT IN 1750

Annual meeting place of West Jersey Proprietors since 1687. Headquarters of Gloucester County Fox Hunting Club, organized 1766, and oldest hunting club in America. Famed City Troop of Philadelphia sprang from this organization. Betsy Ross was married there in 1773. Meeting place for committees of Old Gloucester County. On nearby site was original court house of Old Gloucester County. City was County seat for 100 Years. Headquarters of General Lord Cornwallis during seizure of Gloucester Town in 1777. Tavern demolished in 1929 to make way for county park.

This land was known as Arwaumus, after the Indians, whose village was located about one mile inland. When the English settlers arrived in 1677 the land was named Gloucester Point. As the population slowly increased the county of Gloucester was formed in 1686 and the Point, which became the county seat, was renamed Gloucester Town. In 1688 the Gloucester County Court had issued its first ferry license for operation of a ferry between Gloucester Point and Wicaco (South Philadelphia).

One of South Jersey's best known taverns, "Hugg's Tavern," was built about 1720 by Joseph Hugg who also operated the ferry close to the inn. In 1773 the British ship POLLY arrived at the Point with tea. Its Master, Captain Ayres, was persuaded to sail back to England with his cargo under threat of what had happened earlier at the more publicized Boston Tea Party.

The only tangible evidence of the rich role Gloucester Point played in our nation's history is the remains of the British ship AUGUSTA. The 64-gun frigate was sunk on October 23, 1777 following the American victory at Red Bank. An attempt to raise the ship and take it up the Schuylkill River for the Centennial Exposition of 1876 failed and the AUGUSTA sank for the last time off Gloucester Point, where parts of it may still be seen at low tide. During the Revolution, Lord Cornwallis with 5,000 British and Hessian troops occupied the town, the officers requisitioning Hugg's Tavern.

Gloucester Point is famous for other British citizens. John Wesley, answering the request from Methodists in the Colonies that he send ministers to help them, sent the Rev. Richard Boardman and the Rev. Joseph Pilmore, who volunteered for the service, to America as ambassadors for Christ. They set sail in the latter part of August. The passage was long, tedious and unpleasant and after nine long weeks they landed in America at Gloucester Point, October 21st, 1769.

There being no meeting of Methodists in this area at this early date, Boardman and Pilmore, after resting for a while in Hugg's Tavern, proceeded to Philadelphia by way of the ferry operating from Gloucester Point to Wicaco by the Huggs who owned Hugg's Tavern. Boardman and Pilmore, the first two Methodist missionaries to America, served in America for four years. Their ministries were divided between Philadelphia and New York, preaching as they stopped in places through which they traveled in New Jersey. Boardman took an extensive trip to the New England area and Pilmore traveled as far south as Savannah, Georgia, during the year before they returned to England.

Methodist preaching was established very early in Gloucester. Joseph

Pilmore "preached at Gloucester Court House in New Jersey where the people seemed just ripe for the Gospel and received the word with joy,"<sup>1</sup> Sunday, August 12, 1770. This is the first of several times he was in Gloucester to visit or to preach.

Bishop Francis Asbury, another Methodist minister appointed to America by John Wesley was in Gloucester May the 14th, 1772, but he does not mention preaching there at that time. In his JOURNAL, Asbury records:

Sunday 24. (May 1772). We rode down to Greenwich, where I preached at ten o'clock to near three hundred people, collected from different parts; we then rode back to friend Price's where we dined; and thence to Gloucester which, made near fifteen miles. I preached there at three o'clock to about two hundred people, and then went up the river in a boat to Philadelphia, where I preached at seven o'clock.<sup>2</sup>

The next time he was in Gloucester, Asbury tells us, "at Gloucester I preached only to a few dead souls, . . ."<sup>3</sup> Many times Asbury's path was in and through Gloucester. At one time he "walked down to Gloucester Point."<sup>4</sup> It is not known for certain as to whether Asbury landed here at Gloucester Point when he came to America. On this walk to Gloucester Point, he could have been thinking of the landing of the first Methodist Missionaries, Boardman and Pilmore. The Methodist of New Jersey with visitors from many other states dedicated a monument to these two men on October 25, 1969, celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of their coming to America, October 21, 1769.

In 1820 Methodist meetings were held in the old school house on Market Street, Gloucester east of the West Jersey Railroad. Meetings continued here by the Methodists until Sykes Chapel was erected in 1839 on Market Street, north side between Burlington and Sussex Streets. As the first Methodist work grew, it became the Mother Church for other Methodist Churches in the city of Gloucester. The Praying Band of the First Church was appointed a committee to attend to the religious interests of the Church at Pine Grove, subject to the control of the quarterly conference. This, and other meetings resulted in the forming of the Pine Grove Mission, which became the Pine Grove Methodist Church, now known as the Second Methodist Church. Two other Methodist Churches are in Gloucester. High-

<sup>1</sup> Pilmore, Joseph, JOURNAL, p. 49.

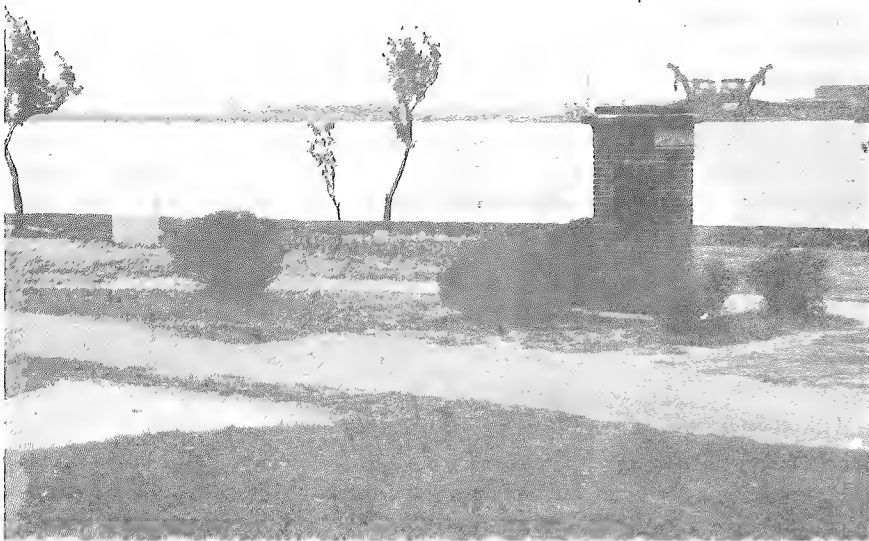
<sup>2</sup> THE JOURNAL AND LETTERS OF FRANCIS ASBURY. Clark, Elmer T. (ed). 3 Vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1958. p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> IBID., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> IBID., p. 34.

land Park Methodist Church began as a Sunday School August 1917. On June 8, 1919, the church was formally founded with a membership of twenty-four. The fourth Methodist Church of Gloucester, Gloucester Heights Methodist Church was organized in 1920.

From its earliest years the northern part of Gloucester Point was destined to become a resort area. The gradual sloping sandy beach soon attracted Philadelphians as a desirable place for bathing, boating and fishing. During the late 1800's many summer houses were built, with living quarters on the second floor and the first floor used to house boats. By 1895 the end of Gloucester Point as a pleasure resort was in sight, Washington Park having taken its place. In 1929 the Camden County Park Commission acquired twelve acres of land comprising most of historic Gloucester Point. Hugg's Tavern was torn down despite protests of historians and politicians, and on the site playgrounds and swimming facilities were erected.



At Gloucester Point a monument marks the place where the West Jersey Proprietors have met on every April 13th since 1688. Another monument marks the place where the AUGUSTA sank. The third marker stands on the spot where Hugg's tavern of Colonial days once stood welcoming people from the old world. The newest monument was dedicated October 24, 1969 by Bishop Prince Albert Taylor, Jr. of the New Jersey Area and Bishop Fred Pierce Corson, retired, to commemorate the landing of Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman, first Methodist preachers appointed to America by the Rev. John Wesley.

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS:

A

### CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE

*Was Delivered at Gloucester City, New Jersey, October 24th, 1869*

ON

### THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

### ARRIVAL OF RICHARD BOARDMAN AND JOSEPH PILMORE

WESLEY'S FIRST REGULAR MISSIONARIES TO AMERICA,

BY

REV. J. B. WAKELY.

The one hundredth anniversary of the landing of Boardman and Pilmore at Gloucester City, N. J., was celebrated at that place, on the 24th day of October last, at which time, among other interesting exercises the following appropriate Ode was sung:

I  
Praise God, that in our glorious land,  
A hundred years ago,  
There met a small, but faithful band,  
A hundred years ago.  
'Mid persecuting storms they came,  
Their hearts inspired with holy flame,  
This "two or three in Jesus' name,"  
A hundred years ago.

II  
Their bark set out, for glory bound,  
A hundred years ago,  
Though angry billows surged around,  
A hundred years ago.  
That little bark, though tempest-toss'd,  
Praise God! to-day, was never lost,  
Urged on by winds from Pentecost,  
A hundred years ago.

III  
A seed was sown in doubts and fears,  
A hundred years ago,  
And daily wet with cantrite tears,  
A hundred years ago.  
And from that germ a harvest sprang,—  
O' how the courts of heaven rang,  
And how the saints and angels sang  
A hundred years ago.

IV  
The flame still burns that thrill'd our  
A hundred years ago. (sires)  
The spark that lit our altar fires,  
A hundred years ago;  
O may it spread, that flame divine,  
Till every soul shall sweetly join  
The song that woke our native clime,  
A hundred years ago.

The effect of this was heightened by a chorus in another measure, and which, to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne," was sung at the end of each verse, as follows:

Praise God! ye ransomed hosts above!  
Praise Him, ye saints below!  
God speed the work our sires began  
A hundred years ago!

## THE REVEREND RICHARD BOARDMAN (1738-1782)

by  
ROBERT BEVIS STEELMAN

As a contribution to the  
Bicentennial Celebration  
of the Landing of Joseph Pilmore  
and Richard Boardman  
at Gloucester Point, N.J.

October 24-25, 1969



No leader of early American Methodism is so little known as is Richard Boardman. Few, if any, studies have been done on him. THE PRELIMINARY UNION CARD CATALOG OF METHODIST HISTORICAL MATERIALS lists nothing on Boardman.

Other than bits of information gleaned from various sources, the best reference this writer was able to find was John P. Lockwood's, THE WESTERN PIONEERS or "Memorials of the Lives and Labours of the Rev. Richard Boardman and the Rev. Joseph Pilmore the first preachers appointed by John Wesley to labour

in North America."

Yet, Richard Boardman was John Wesley's first assistant in America. He was the first leader of American Methodism.

### CALL TO AMERICA

The story of Richard Boardman and Methodism in America begins with the Conference held by John Wesley and his preachers at Leeds, England. It was Wesley's 26th Conference and it began August 1, 1769. The question of sending some preachers to America was raised and dealt with in this fashion:

"Q. 13. We have a pressing call from our brethren at New York (who have built a preaching-house) to come over and help them. Who is willing to go?

"A. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore.

"Q. 14. What can we do more in token of our brotherly love?

"A. Let us make a collection amongst ourselves.

"This was immediately done. And out of it 50 pounds were allotted for the payment of their debt and about twenty pounds given to our brethren for their passage."

The pressing call from our brethren at New York was a letter from Thomas Taylor to John Wesley dated April 11, 1768.<sup>2</sup> Baker indicates that the letter was originally read at the Bristol Conference in August of 1768 and then copied and circulated among Wesley's 40 "assistants" in charge of the British Circuits. Thus the way was prepared for the call for preachers to go to America when Wesley next met with his preachers at Leeds in 1769.

Taylor's letter appealed for "an able, experienced preacher—one who has both gifts and graces necessary for the work. . . . We must have a man of wisdom, of sound faith, and a good disciplinarian, one whose heart and soul are in the work; and I doubt not but by the goodness of God such a flame would be soon kindled as would never stop until it reached the great South Sea."<sup>3</sup>

### BOARDMAN, THE MAN

Who was this Richard Boardman who volunteered for this mission to America? Actually not very much is known of his early life. According to tradition he was born in Gillimoor.<sup>4</sup> He entered the travelling Methodist ministry in 1763 and travelled successively the Grimsby, Limerick, Cork and Dale Circuits.<sup>5</sup>

Tragedy came to Boardman while serving the Dale Circuit early in 1769 and this no doubt influenced his decision to go to America. On January 22, 1769 his infant daughter Mary died. Five days later his wife Olive was also taken to be with God. A record of the Dale Circuit Quarterly Meeting in 1769 records a payment given to Mr. Boardman "for burin (sic.) his wife, 2.2.0"<sup>6</sup> They were buried at Barnard-Castle.

An interesting incident occurred shortly before Boardman left England

<sup>1</sup> Noted in Nehemiah Curnock, THE JOURNAL OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), V, 330 n.

<sup>2</sup> The original letter is lost. The best reproduction is the one by Frank Boker, "Early American Methodism: A Key Document" in METHODIST HISTORY, Vol. III, No. 2, January 1965 (Loke Junaluska, N. C.: Association of Methodist Historical Societies), 3-15.

<sup>3</sup> IBID., 14.

<sup>4</sup> John P. Lockwood, THE WESTERN PIONEERS (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1881), 35.

<sup>5</sup> IBID.

<sup>6</sup> IBID., 38.

for America. He preached in the little town of Monyash, near Bristol. His sermon on the prayer of Jabez from 1 Chronicles 4:10 led to the conversion of a young woman in the congregation by the name of Mary Redfern. Nearly ten years later she married William Bunting. When their first son was born, true to her resolution she made the night of her conversion, she named him Jabez, in honor of Richard Boardman's sermon. Jabez Bunting became, in the 19th Century, an outstanding leader of British Methodism.<sup>7</sup>

## AMERICA

Immediately after receiving their appointments to America, Boardman and Pilmore made plans to leave England. Monday, August 21st they took passage on board the ship the Mary and Elizabeth. Pilmore notes in his JOURNAL under the above date:

Took leave of our dear concerned friends, went to the Carolina Coffee House where we met Capt'n. Sparks, with whom we were to sail, and 2 gentlemen who were to go passage with us."<sup>8</sup>

They took a coach for Gravesend and embarked that evening for Philadelphia.

The trip lasted a stormy nine weeks. Pilmore relates that Boardman was sick all of one week. On Sunday September 2nd Boardman preached at a service held on the quarter deck. His text was "The great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"<sup>9</sup>

The Mary and Elizabeth dropped anchor in the Delaware River, 6 miles below Philadelphia, on October 20th. The next day Boardman and Pilmore landed at Gloucester Point on the New Jersey shore. As soon as they stepped foot on land they sang the Doxology and gave praise to God for their deliverance. They rested a while at Hugg's Tavern before going on to Philadelphia.<sup>10</sup>

J. B. Wakely, Methodist historian, in his Centennial sermon at Gloucester Point in 1869 said of Gloucester Point:

Here they ended their voyage. Here their feet first pressed American soil. From that day Gloucester Point is immortal, im-

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Simpson, ed., CYCLOPEDIA OF METHODISM (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts 4th revised edition, 1881), 113, 114. See the Article "The Centenary of Richard Boardman's Visit to Monyash On His Way to the Port Of Bristol." (Derby: W. & W. Pike and Son, 1869). Zerox copy in files S.N.J. Conference Historical Library.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Pilmore, JOURNAL (Typed copy in the possession of the Philadelphia Conference Historical Society), 6.

<sup>9</sup> IBID., 7.

<sup>10</sup> IBID., 9. See also the Article on Gloucester Point by Harry Green.

mortal as the first place in America, where Wesley's first Missionaries landed. It deserves a conspicuous place in the Annals of American Methodist. It should be embalmed in Methodist history.<sup>11</sup>

The missionaries destiny was New York. For some reason they were not aware of the existence of any other Methodist congregation in America. They crossed the river by ferry from Gloucester Point to Philadelphia in order to take a Stage to New York.

Imagine the surprise of Boardman when walking down a strange street, in a strange city—Philadelphia, in a strange new land when all of a sudden somebody calls out—"Hello, Mr. Boardman!" It was a member of one of Boardman's former Society's in Ireland who knew his former pastor was coming and was out looking for him.<sup>12</sup>

Boardman went home with his old friend heard all about the Methodist Society in Philadelphia and met Captain Webb. The next day Boardman preached his first sermon in America to a small, but serious congregation, on the very appropriate text, "By faith Abraham, when he was called. . . ."<sup>13</sup>

As Wesley's appointed Assistant, Boardman left Pilmore in Philadelphia to tend the work there and hastened on to New York. On the way the Stage stopped in Trenton. Meeting some British soldiers stationed in New Jersey's capitol he agreed to preach to them that night if they would find him a place to preach. They secured the use of the Presbyterian Church and there Boardman preached his second sermon in America.<sup>14</sup>

Arriving in New York, Boardman found much to do. Money had to be raised to pay for the new Wesley Chapel. In order to secure Methodist rights to the Chapel, a new deed had to be drawn. There was need to enter into an understanding with the Church officials as to what their mutual responsibilities would be. The need for much preaching both in and around the City was evident as well as instruction to be given the members of the Class. And John Wesley back in England would have to be kept informed of developments.

Boardman wasted no time in getting to work. On November 1st he drew up the following Agreement with the Officials of Wesley Chapel:

Mr. Richard Boardman assistant to, and preacher in connec-

<sup>11</sup> J. B. Wakely, ONE HUNDRED YEARS: A CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE (Philadelphia: The Methodist Home Journal, 1870), 4.

<sup>12</sup> Lockwood, 76.

<sup>13</sup> IBID.

<sup>14</sup> IBID., 98.

tion with Rev. John Wesley, also Philip Embury, local preacher, and William Lupton, a trustee and steward, thinking it necessary that some regulation should be made for the preachers in New York agreed, on the first of November, 1769. First. That each preacher, having labored 3 months in New York, shall receive 3 guineas, to provide themselves with wearing apparel. Secondly. That there shall be preaching on Sunday morning and Sunday evening, also on Tuesday and Thursday evening, and the preacher to meet the society every Wednesday evening."<sup>15</sup>

Another interesting note in an "old book" said, "The preachers are allowed one quire of writing paper for every quarter, and no more."<sup>16</sup> Apparently the New York Society did not want their preachers to write out very many sermons.

Boardman brought with him the cash sent over by John Wesley and the English Methodists. The original John Street Church record book records that on October 30, 1769 an amount of 25 pounds, 16 shillings was "received from Mr. Boardman."<sup>17</sup> The rest of the donation was apparently in the form of books which Pilmore sold. March 31, 1770 from the sale of books brought from England, Pilmore turned over 22 additional pounds to the New York Society.<sup>18</sup>

A letter to John Wesley dated November 4, 1769 records Boardman's initial impression of the work in New York and America:

Our house (Wesley Chapel) contains about seventeen hundred<sup>19</sup> people. About one third of those who attend get in; the rest are glad to hear with out. There appears such a willingness in the Americans to hear the word as I never saw before. They have no preaching in some parts of the back-settlements. I doubt not but an effectual door will be opened among them. O may the Most High now give His Son the heathen for His inheritance! The number of blacks that attend the preaching affects me much.<sup>20</sup>

Boardman was evidently quite impressed and enthused about his work now beginning in America. The prospects were quite appealing.

<sup>15</sup> J. B. Wokely, *LOST CHAPTERS RECOVERED FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF AMERICAN METHODISM* (New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham, 1889), 200.

<sup>16</sup> *IBID.*, 201.

<sup>17</sup> John Street Church, Old Book No. 1, 1.

<sup>18</sup> *IBID.*

<sup>19</sup> Historians, including Lockwood, agree that this figure is probably an error for 700. Even this lesser figure would mean, according to Boardman's way of counting that over 2,000 tried to attend services.

<sup>20</sup> Lockwood, 99.

## BOARDMAN AS ASSISTANT

As Wesley's Assistant Boardman set out to order the work as Wesley might have done. And in so doing he set a pattern for an itinerant ministry that was to be the model in America for years to come. As the Assistant, Boardman insisted that he and Pilmore change pastorates between New York and Philadelphia frequently. They changed at least three times a year in the spring, summer and fall.

John Street Church records some of the expense involved in these moves:

Feb. 10, 1770	—to cash paid for carriage of Mr. Boardman's travel from Philadelphia.	1-4-0
Feb. 17, 1770	—to Mr. Boardman's traveling expence.	2-0-0
April 10, 1770	—to cash paid Mr. Boardman to pay his expenses to Philadelphia."	1-4-0
Nov. 22, 1770	—to cash paid Mr. Boardman to carry him to Philadelphia.	2-0-0
August 12, 1771	—to cash H. N. paid for ye freight of Mr. Boardman's trunk.	-11-4 <sup>21</sup>

Pilmore did not like to move so often. He saw little good coming from it. He preferred a more settled ministry. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that induced him to become an Anglican rector. At any rate, Pilmore's *JOURNAL* reveals his dissatisfaction at having to make such frequent changes. December 22, 1771 Pilmore had to get ready to leave Philadelphia. He complains:

At present I have a most delicate prospect of doing good not only in the City, but also in the country round about, as the Churches of the Episcopalians, Lutherans, Swedes and Presbyterians are open to me, and vast multitudes attend the word and seem to embrace it— Yet I must go and leave them. Mr. Boardman wants to be here and I am obliged to submit— This is rather trying, not to leave this Place, but to leave the work at this time when God is so manifestly working by me, however it is not my doings—I hope it will not be held to my charge— May God give his blessing to my dear fellow-laborer, and crown him with more abundant success.<sup>22</sup>

Not only was it Boardman's plan to move frequently, but also to make New York and Philadelphia merely the base of operations into the nearby town and villages.

<sup>21</sup> John Street Records, 9-15. There are other such entries.

<sup>22</sup> Pilmore's *Journal*, 129.



It is a matter of record that Boardman preached in Westchester, New Rochelle and other places around New York.<sup>23</sup>

Jesse Lee, in his *A SHORT HISTORY OF THE METHODISTS*, says in 1770 "he preached considerably in the state of New Jersey."<sup>24</sup> Atkinson records a visit to Burlington, N.J.<sup>25</sup>

Asbury's *JOURNAL* reveals other places where Boardman preached: Mrs. Withey's in Chester, Pa., Princeton, N.J., Joseph Presbury's on the western shore of Maryland.<sup>26</sup>

It was also Boardman's plan that sent Pilmore on a year's preaching mission through the south as far as Savannah, Georgia. Boardman himself went to New England, preaching in Providence and organizing a Class in Boston. This was in 1772.<sup>27</sup>

Yet Boardman was criticized for spending too much time in the cities to the neglect of other areas. Asbury in particular was very sensitive about this. Asbury, soon after his arrival, said:

At present I am dissatisfied. I judge we are to be shut up in the cities this winter. My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I shall show them the way.<sup>28</sup>

The footnote in Asbury's *JOURNAL* says this refers to his disagreement with Boardman and Pilmore concerning the principle of itineracy. Asbury insisted on frequent changes in appointment or a 'circuit of preaching' while the others believed in longer tenures.<sup>29</sup>

However as has been pointed out above the itineracy plan was precisely what Boardman advocated to the consternation of Pilmore. Asbury soon found out that Boardman and he were largely in agreement and with regards to the stationing of preachers seemed largely to agree. When Boardman announced his plans to visit New England and send Pilmore through the South with Richard Wright being assigned to New York and

<sup>23</sup> J. Manning Potts, "Methodism in Colonial America," *THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN METHODISM*, I (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), 90.

<sup>24</sup> Jesse Lee, *A SHORT HISTORY OF THE METHODISTS IN THE U.S.A., 1766-1809* (Baltimore: Magill and Clime, 1810), 26.

<sup>25</sup> John Atkinson, *THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT IN AMERICA* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1896), 321.

<sup>26</sup> See entries under dates: April 8, 1772, October 19, 1772, December 13, 1772.

<sup>27</sup> Wakely, Last Chapters, 204.

<sup>28</sup> Asbury, *JOURNAL*, Nov. 21, 1771.

<sup>29</sup> *IBID.*, I, 10n.

Asbury to Philadelphia for three months Asbury said "With this I was well pleased."<sup>30</sup>

Boardman seems to have done a very accreditable job as Assistant. But Wesley replaced him as Assistant with Asbury in a letter Asbury received on October 10, 1772.<sup>31</sup> About 8 months later Asbury was in turn replaced by Rankin.

## BACK TO ENGLAND

Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore were among the preachers attending the first Conference of Methodist preachers in America. They met in Philadelphia July 14-16, 1773. The preachers attending were: Asbury, Rankin, Shadford, Pilmore, Webb, Wright, King, Whitworth, Yearly and Boardman.<sup>32</sup> Boardman must have taken an active part in this Conference because he preached "a most excellent sermon on the important work of the gospel ministry" on the eve of the Conference.<sup>33</sup> Yet neither Pilmore nor Boardman were given an appointment and there seems to be no satisfactory reason why. Perhaps even then Boardman had it in his mind to return to England.

Within six months after his first General Conference, Wesley's first preachers in America had left to return to England. Threatening war clouds no doubt hastened their going.

At any rate they sailed from New York on Saturday, January 1, 1774 for Bristol, England.<sup>34</sup> Pilmore was reluctant to go, but he did not wish to leave his friend. His *JOURNAL* dated Friday, December 24, 1773 makes the following observation:

I received a letter from Mr. Boardman informing me of a ship bound from Bristol that he had taken his passage—was to sail in a few days and wished to know whether I would go with him—This put me to a trial—For at that time, I had a matter of great importance under consideration which offered me a most pleasing prospect both to the convenience of life the advantage of the Redeemer's kingdom and the comfort of my own soul; but after some deliberation, I resolved to sacrifice my own ease, interest, and inclination, and return with my FELLOW TRAVELLER to England. FRIENDSHIP has so united our hearts, that I could not bear

<sup>30</sup> *IBID.*, 25.

<sup>31</sup> See *JOURNAL* under above date.

<sup>32</sup> See Asbury, *JOURNAL*, I, 85n.

<sup>33</sup> Pilmore, *JOURNAL* 263.

<sup>34</sup> *IBID.*, 292.



the thought of letting him go alone, and therefore left all my own conditions unsettled, that I might accompany him to our native land.<sup>35</sup>

Back in England Boardman continued his work as a Methodist preacher. He filled the following appointments:

1774, 5—Assistant at Londonderry  
1776, 7—Assistant at Cork  
1778, 9—Helper at Limerick  
1780 —London with John Wesley, Charles Wesley  
and Thomas Coke  
1781 —Limerick  
182 —Cork<sup>36</sup>

Then suddenly on Sunday, September 29, 1782 while going out to dinner he was taken ill. He recovered sufficiently to preach on Tuesday, but was taken with another attack about 3 o'clock Friday afternoon and by 9 o'clock that night, October 4th, Richard Boardman went to meet his Savior. He was buried October 7, 1782 at St. Fin Barr's Cathedral, Cork, Ireland.<sup>37</sup> He left to mourn him a widow to whom he had been married about 13 months and an infant son soon to become an orphan.<sup>38</sup>

#### APPRAISAL

What can be said about his life in retrospect—about his usefulness as a Methodist minister—in particular about his work in America?

John Wesley called him "a pious, good-natured, sensible man, greatly beloved of all who knew him."<sup>39</sup>

Francis Asbury said, "My friend Boardman is a kind, loving, worthy man, truly amiable and entertaining, and of a child-like temper."<sup>40</sup>

Abel Stevens wrote of the work of Boardman and Pilmore, "They left America with 2,073 members in Society, 10 regularly organized Circuits and 17 preachers. . . . In cooperation with their associates, they laid

<sup>35</sup> 292, 293.

<sup>36</sup> Lockwood, 181-185.

<sup>37</sup> *IBID.*, 185, 186. See also "ANNALS OF ST. FIN BARR'S CATHEDRAL, pp. 84, 85.

<sup>38</sup> *IBID.*

<sup>39</sup> Wesley in 1783 Minutes. Quoted in Lockwood, 186.

<sup>40</sup> JOURNAL, I, 91, Nov. 12, 1771.

substantially and broadly the foundations of the denomination, preaching from Boston to Savannah and preparing effectively, during more than 4 years, the work which their successors were to prosecute with a success which has had no parallel since the Apostolic Age."<sup>41</sup>

Wakely says he left behind him "the fragrance of a good name!"<sup>42</sup>

One of Boardman's early converts in New York was John Mann who "became a preacher of wide usefulness,"<sup>43</sup> and the Apostle of Methodism in Nova Scotia.

John Atkinson in the BEGINNING OF THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT IN AMERICA underscores the above truth about Boardman and his ability to lead men to Christ. He writes, "Boardman was an effective preacher in the true sense that his sermons brought souls to God."<sup>44</sup>

Jesse Lee, in describing the work of both Boardman and Pilmore as missionaries says that this was "a work for which they were well qualified, and in which they were owned and honored of God, and made a blessing to thousands."<sup>45</sup>

Dr. J. Manning Potts writing in THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN METHODISM says that Boardman "was remembered as being personable and well liked, a better than average preacher, who was effective in the evangelistic task despite poor physical health."<sup>46</sup>

His Irish brethern said of his preaching among them that "with eloquence divine he preached the word and devils trembled when for Christ he fought."<sup>47</sup>

Richard Boardman deserves more credit than he has hitherto received. He was the first appointed leader of Methodism in the United States. Under him the work progressed in New York and Philadelphia and surrounding areas. It was through his influence that Methodist preaching was heard as far north as Boston and as far south as Savannah. Jesse Lee is known as the father of Methodism in New England and he deserves that title, but Richard Boardman was preaching in New England long before.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Curnock, WESLEY'S JOURNAL, 330n.

<sup>42</sup> ONE HUNDRED YEARS, 12.

<sup>43</sup> James M. Buckley, A HISTORY OF METHODISM IN THE U.S. (New York: Horper & Brothers, 1898), I, 151.

<sup>44</sup> 189.

<sup>45</sup> 26.

<sup>46</sup> I, 89.

<sup>47</sup> Lockwood, 188.

Richard Boardman started the itinerant system which was destined to help make the Methodist Church the most truly representative denomination in America. He was a zealous evangelist whose aim was to win souls for Jesus Christ. Boardman was first leader the Methodist Church in America had and he did his work well. The only wish one could have is that he had left us some writings to tell the extent of his labors and by which more accurately to judge Wesley's assistant.

When Boardman died Charles Wesley wrote this epitaph:

With zeal for God,  
with love of souls inspired,  
Nor awed by dangers,  
nor by labours tired,  
Boardman in distant worlds  
proclaimed the word  
To multitudes, and turned them  
to his Lord.  
But soon the bloody waste  
of war he mourns,  
And, loyal, from rebellion's  
seat returns;  
Nor yet at home,  
on eagle's pinions flies,  
And in a moment soars  
to paradise.<sup>48</sup>

Yet not this inscription, but one said to have been composed by a Cork hairdresser appears on his flat-topped tomb:<sup>49</sup>

MR. RICHARD BOARDMAN  
Departed this life October 4, 1782

Beneath this stone the dust of Boardman lies,  
His pious soul has soared above the skies;  
With eloquence divine he preached the Word  
To multitudes and turned them to the Lord.  
His bright experience strengthened what he taught,  
And devils trembled when for Christ he fought;  
With truth and Christian zeal he nations fired,  
And all who knew him mourned when he expired.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Lockwood, 187.

<sup>49</sup> THE METHODIST RECORDER, Sept. 24, 1903, 1039.

<sup>50</sup> IBID., 188.

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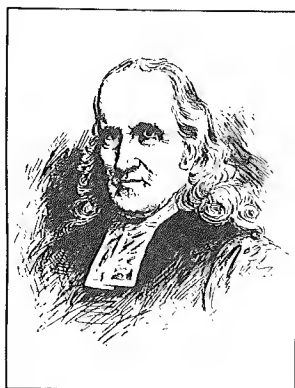
THE REVEREND JOSEPH PILMORE, D.D.  
(1739-1825)

by

J. HILLMAN COFFEE, Th.D.

As a contribution to the  
Bicentennial Celebration  
of the landing of Joseph Pilmore  
and Richard Boardman  
at Gloucester Point, N.J.

October 24-25, 1969



Year after year, annual conferences of Methodism have read or "fixed" the appointments of preachers. In the conferences of 1968, 29,844 ministers were serving 37,968 churches and special appointments.<sup>1</sup> Two hundred years ago, in the month of August 1769, the Rev. John Wesley presiding at the conference at Leeds, England, made appointments for fifty circuits. The fiftieth circuit was America, Ministerial support for the Methodist ministers of 1968 was \$187,176,926.<sup>2</sup> The Leeds conference received an offering of seventy pounds for the church at New York and for the expense of the volunteers going to America. Fifty pounds were

for the debt of the New York church, and twenty pounds were for the passage of the first missionaries to America. Concerning the amount of money raised to defray the expenses of the first American missionaries the following interesting comparison has been tabulated: "It has been figured that it cost Spain about three hundred dollars invested in the expedition of Columbus to discover a new world. It cost British Methodism only one hundred dollars to establish its spiritual presence in that same world."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GENERAL MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 1968, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> IBID.

<sup>3</sup> THE STORY OF METHODISM, Luccock, H. E. & Hutchinson, P. New York: Abingdon Press, 1949, p. 141.

THE APPEAL FROM AMERICA

As early as 1741, George Whitefield expressed the hope that God would "raise up fellow-laborers in America."<sup>4</sup> Philip Embury, Thomas Taylor, and Thomas Bell, members of the New York Society, as well as Captain Webb, the Methodist Lay Evangelist, and people in Maryland, who had been awakened under the ministry of Mr. Robert Strawbridge, a Local Preacher from Ireland, sent request to Wesley. The main appeal came from the society in New York. Thomas Taylor, who had been a Methodist in England and had been in America only about six months, wrote to Mr. Wesley from New York, April 11, 1768, giving a statement of conditions in New York and making an appeal for a minister.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Taylor gives the characteristics of the type of man that they would like to have. In asking for a minister, Taylor is not unmindful of the faithful preaching of Mr. Webb and Mr. Embury, who were lay preachers. The sincerity of the need for a fully trained preacher is seen in Mr. Taylor's letter, "with regard to money to pay the preacher's passage over, if they can not procure it, we will sell our coats and our shirts to procure it for them. . . . I trust you will not forget the church in this wilderness."<sup>6</sup>

In answer to a question, "Who is willing to go?" asked at the conference at Leeds, England two young men responded: Richard Boardman, thirty-one years of age, and Joseph Pilmore, two months prior to his thirtieth birthday. It was at Bristol, England a year before that Mr. Wesley revealed that he had received the letter from Mr. Taylor. Because of the urgent needs of the Methodist work in England and the importance of such a step in sending missionaries to the new world, definite action had been postponed for the year. The year between the two conferences was a very soul stirring one for Pilmore. He speaks of his experience as he thought of this request.

During that year, which I spent chiefly in Pembrokeshire, I was frequently under great exercise of mind respecting the dear Americans and found a willingness to sacrifice everything for their sakes. I was happy enough as to my situation and connections and met with the utmost encouragement from the people and from the preachers, yet I could not be satisfied to continue in Europe. A sense of duty so affected my mind, and my heart was drawn out with such longing desires to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom that I was made perfectly willing to forego my kindred

<sup>4</sup> THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA, Tees, F. H., Nashville: The Porthenon Press, 1940. p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> ONE HUNDRED YEARS: A CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE, Wokely, J. B. Philadelphia: The Methodist Home Journal, 1870. p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> IBID., pp. 7, 8.

and native land, with all that was most near and dear to me on earth, that I might spread abroad the honors of his glorious name.<sup>7</sup>

Pilmore's experience was not without doubts concerning his decision. His mother's resignation to the will of God gave Pilmore the assurance that he was taking the right step. The support of the Wesleys and the other ministers is reflected in Pilmore's words: "This was of great blessing to us as it afforded us the pleasing reflection that we had not acted contrary to the mind of our brethren and fathers in Christ."<sup>8</sup>

### THE TRIP TO AMERICA

The trip to the new land was full of frightening and yet faith-building experiences. The trip began on Monday, August 21, 1769 aboard the ship Mary and Elizabeth. Days of calm forced the ship to weigh anchor sometimes for several days; then at other times, favorable winds carried it along on its journey or stormy winds tossed it about.

Sept. 28. We had a most fearful storm. It began about seven o'clock in the morning, and continued till the next day. For a little while, we kept our course but were soon obliged to hand all sails and lay to till the storm was over. I had often been told of THE SEA RUNNING MOUNTAINS HIGH but could never form any idea of it till now the dreadful surges came rolling, and roaring with such fury, that it seemed utterly impossible for the ship to live or keep above water. Then indeed we saw THE works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep.<sup>9</sup>

This sea experience became a very challenging experience for Pilmore in deepening his faith and confidence in God.

In this day of distress the Lord was our strength and our salvation. One thing I could not but remark, that (though I had ever been very sick whenever it was rough before) this day I was not sick at all! In the morning when I went on deck and saw the danger we were in, instantly my heart filled with the pure love of God, and all fear of death and hell was entirely taken away. I had not the shadow of a doubt of my acceptance, but was fully assured if I died then, I should be eternally happy with God in the Kingdom of heaven—and this continued all day, nor did it forsake me during the storm. Of all the happy days of my life, this was by far the most happy and was a great comfort to me during the rest of the voyage.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> JOURNAL, Pilmore, Joseph. (Typed Copy.) pp. 1, 2.

<sup>8</sup> IBID., p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> IBID., p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> IBID., p. 8.

A journey of nine weeks finally ended when they reached land on October 20, 1769, "and on the 21, landed at Gloucester Point, six miles below Philadelphia. When we got on shore, we joined in a Doxology and gave praise to God for our deliverance, and all the mercies bestowed upon us during the passage."<sup>11</sup>

Pilmore and Boardman came to our land with the intention of going to New York to serve. They crossed on the ferry at Gloucester Point and began their journey on foot to Philadelphia.

Having no knowledge of any Society in Phila. we had resolved to hasten forward to New York as soon as possible. But God had work for us to do that we knew not of. As we were walking along one of the streets a man who had been in a society in Ireland and had seen Mr. Boardman there met us and challenged him. This was very Providential, for he informed us they had heard that two preachers were arrived and he was then out seeing us.<sup>12</sup>

On the day following their arrival, Pilmore and Boardman's first sabbath in America, Pilmore attended public worship at St. Paul's, Philadelphia. He heard a "profitable" sermon by the Reverend Mr. Stringer. Until the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Holy Communion was received by the leaders of the Methodist Societies in St. Paul's.

In the afternoon of that first Sunday in America, Pilmore preached to several thousand "genteel persons" at five o'clock, while he was standing on a stage erected for the Horse Races. In his words, he says, "It was truly a delight".

Pilmore enjoyed the work in America even more than he had anticipated. He led a busy and active life. He enjoyed the zeal with which the word of God was received. It was not unusual for preaching service to begin at five o'clock in the morning. Some weeks, it was necessary to preach twice each day besides holding personal consultations and conducting class meetings. Pilmore records:

God has opened a great and effectual door in this place for the preaching of His Gospel. Of all that I have seen in England and Wales where I have travelled, nothing was equal to this! The Word runs from heart to heart, and from house to house in such a manner that I am filled with wonder and praise.<sup>13</sup>

Pilmore made his first journey through New Jersey on Monday, March

<sup>11</sup> IBID., p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> IBID., p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> IBID., pp. 12, 13.

26, 1770. This was five months after his landing at Gloucester Point. On this trip he does not record stopping at any place in New Jersey to preach, although he records that he arrived in New York about eight o'clock on Wednesday evening. Four months later, on July 25, 1770, he began his return trip to Philadelphia and in his JOURNAL records his first preaching experience in New Jersey. Arrangements were made with Boardman to meet at Prince Town (Princeton) on Thursday, July 26. Several friends accompanied Pilmore as far as Newark, where they had dinner. The friends then returned to the City, and he went forward with Mr. Jarvis as far as Brunswick.

From this place we set off early the next morning and hastening forward, we reached Prince Town before the heat was very troublesome—Here we met Mr. Boardman with our friends from Philadelphia—After we spent two or three hours together, we parted in peace; Mr. Jarvis returned to New York with Mr. Boardman, and I went forward with my Dear Philadelphians—In our way we called at Bordington where I preached in the evening to a fine Congregation in the Baptist Meeting—Afterwards we were kindly entertained by a gentlemen belonging to the Presbyterians. The love of God shed abroad in the heart makes all needless distinctions void—for true believers are all one in Christ Jesus.<sup>14</sup>

We, thus find that Pilmore's first record of preaching in New Jersey states that he preached in Bordington.

The next day as they traveled toward the city of Burlington, a gentlemen met them on the road and took them to his house for breakfast. At 10 o'clock Pilmore found a fine congregation waiting in the Town Hall where he preached, "with great freedom and enlargeness of heart." He went on to Philadelphia and arrived "before preaching" so he immediately went to the service. As a preacher under appointment, he made four such exchanges with Boardman, two in 1770 and two in 1771.

The places where Pilmore preached are many. In both the Philadelphia and New York areas he reached to many communities and preached in many types of places as well as churches of many denominations. His travels between the two cities gave him opportunity to preach in homes, court-houses, jails, and churches. These excerpts from Pilmore's JOURNAL give us glimpses of his work. "August 12, 1770, Sun. 12 God blessed us with a season of grace in the morning; at ten o'clock, I preached at Gloucester Court House in New Jersey where the people seemed just ripe for the Gospel, and received the word of joy"<sup>15</sup> He also records that he came to Gloucester,

where he first set foot in America, September 9, 1770, Sun. 9. "and preached at Gloucester Court House, at five in the afternoon to about three thousand souls upon the Common near the city. . . ."<sup>16</sup> In Trenton on May 14, 1772, he says, "As I was to leave Trenton this day, I preached at five in the morning, and had a great number of people, who found it was good to take up their cross and wait upon the Lord."<sup>17</sup> On October 12, 1773 he "went into the country to preach at Mount Holly where Mr. David Brainerd formerly preached—We had a fine congregation of different denominations in the Presbyterian Meeting, and and deep seriousness set upon every face . . . went about seven miles with Mr. Budd to his house near Julie's Town . . . At ten o'clock the next day I preached in a Tavern in the Town, and had great freedom and enlargeness of heart . . . went to New Mills where I preached in the Baptist Meeting—here also I had great comfort in preaching the gospel. . . ."<sup>18</sup> One of his experiences in Burlington he records: "I found myself greatly refreshed with balmy sleep, had a most comfortable day among those simple-hearted, sensible people and was thus much blessed in the evening while I lectured on the parable of the Ten Virgins."<sup>19</sup>

In March 1772, the last exchange of pulpits was made by Pilmore and Boardman between New York and Philadelphia. New ministers had been assigned to these Societies and Pilmore and Boardman, on April 30, 1772, "agreed to go forth in the name of the Lord, and preach the gospel in the waste places of the wilderness and seek after those who have no shepherd."<sup>20</sup> Pilmore went south and Boardman went north. On May 26, 1772, Pilmore took leave of "my dear Philadelphians."

## PREACHING TOUR OF THE SOUTH

Pilmore's journey took him through Reading, Lebanon, and Lancaster. His was not a trip like we would take today, but one with each day filled with some type of christian witness through preaching, leading the family in prayer, or time of exhortation. Pilmore traveled by horseback or horse and wagon, as well as by boat. He records many dangerous and trying experiences. Some of the time he was fortunate to have others show him the way and other times he had to find the way through the wilderness alone.

Pilmore stayed in the vicinity of Baltimore until July 10, 1772, when he left for Annapolis, Tuesday, July 14th he left Annapolis by boat arriving

<sup>16</sup> IBID., p. 54.

<sup>17</sup> IBID., p. 154.

<sup>18</sup> IBID., p. 279.

<sup>19</sup> IBID., pp. 141, 142.

<sup>20</sup> IBID., p. 150.

<sup>14</sup> IBID., pp. 46, 47.

<sup>15</sup> IBID., p. 49.

at Norfolk, Virginia on Friday. He ministered to the people in this section of Virginia until December. A short trip was made in September to the northern part of North Carolina. Pilmore became ill many times during his travels due to the great strain upon him and the weather he had to travel in. One experience will show to us the determination of this man to preach the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

But while I was preaching I was taken very ill with the fever and could hardly stand till I had finished my discourse! Afterward I grew much worse, and was obliged to take my bed; They gave me a strong sweat which did me much good, and about ten o'clock I got a little ease and was a little refreshed with sleep, so that in the morning I went forward on my journey to Hampton. As I found myself much better I asked for the use of the large dining room which was readily granted, so we sent out to let the people know, and a fine congregation came together at the time appointed; but just as I was preparing to preach, I was seized with a severe fit of Ague—However, as the people were gathered, I was resolved to preach if possible, went immediately into the room and gave out a hymn and then kneeled down in prayer, but was so very sick that I had liked to have fallen down on the floor—Being unable to stand, I told the people if they would permit me to sit down I would try to preach & do the best in my power—The fever was so hot upon me, that I was almost scorched with the heat, and could hardly hold up my head, yet the Lord gave me uncommon clearness in my ideas of things, . . .<sup>21</sup>

Taking leave of his friends in Norfolk, Pilmore began his journey to the farthest point south he was to travel. He went through Edenton, Bath, and Wilmington in North Carolina; George Town (Georgetown), Charles Town (Charleston), and Ashepoo in South Carolina. He crossed the Savannah River at a settlement of French Refugees he calls Purrysburg. This is one of the many interesting, exciting, and many times dangerous crossings of rivers.

As the boat was gone I was obliged to stay all night—Friday morning I set off very early in hopes of getting to Savannah before night—As there was no proper Boat for horses, we were glad to fasten two canoes together with rope, and put the horse with the forefeet in the one and the hinder feet in the other—There was a great fresh in the River which carried us rapidly down the stream for seven miles then we had to turn up a Creek and had the Stream against us, but the Negroes pulled very stoutly, and in about two hours, put me safe ashore.<sup>22</sup>

Many requests were made to Pilmore to preach that he found neces-

<sup>21</sup> *IBID.*, pp. 178.

<sup>22</sup> *IBID.*, p. 220.

sary to refuse. While in Savannah he was requested to continue further south. "Since I came to this Province, I have had many invitations to Fort Augusta, and several different places, but my mind draws me back to revisit the places where I have gone preaching this gospel, and I judge it my DUTY to obey; for I dare not run without commission."

On February 14, 1773, Pilmore began his return trip north, visiting those places where he had preached before. He spent some time in Norfolk and Portsmouth. Pilmore had been instrumental in forming the societies in these two places, the one in Norfolk on November 16, 1772.<sup>23</sup> On June 2, 1773, Pilmore was back in Philadelphia. The remainder of this year, he spent in Philadelphia and New York. As the year was coming to a close Mr. Boardman became anxious to return to England.

Fri. 24 (Dec. 1773) I received a letter from Mr. Boardman informing me of a ship bound from Bristol and that he had taken his passage—was to sail in a few days, and wished to know if I would go with him—This put me to a TRIAL—For at that time, I had a matter of great importance under consideration which afforded me a most pleasing prospect both as to the convenience of life, the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the comfort of my own soul; but after some deliberation I resolved to sacrifice my own case, interest, and inclination, and return with my FELLOW TRAVELLER to Europe—FRIENDSHIP has so united our hearts, that I could not bear the thought of letting him go alone, and therefore left all my own concerns unsettled, that I might accompany him to our native land. . . . All my fortitude, melted away, and I should have yielded to the entreaties of my friends to continue in America, only I was determined not to desert Mr. Boardman though it should cost me my life.<sup>24</sup>

On December 27, 1773 Dr. Pilmore left Philadelphia, "fully resolved, if God permit, to see it again before I die."<sup>25</sup> This trip to New York was much like many of the other trips he had to take because of Boardman's calling for an exchange. Pilmore went to Burlington where he "went directly to the Court-house and found a large congregation waiting for me to whom I preached the gospel with particular freedom and power, and took leave of the dear people, in the fulness of the divine love, which united all believers in one—" <sup>26</sup> This was the last time he preached in New Jersey as a Methodist preacher.

For some reason he crossed to Bristol to wait for the stage. He found

<sup>23</sup> *IBID.*, p. 195.

<sup>24</sup> *IBID.*, pp. 292, 293.

<sup>25</sup> *IBID.*, p. 294.

<sup>26</sup> *IBID.*

the snow so very deep, that no "wheel-carriage" could pass. No carriage came to the Inn where he was obliged to wait, so on December 29, since he was afraid that he might miss the ship with Mr. Boardman, he set off with a Mr. Bessanet in a sleigh for Trenton. No one else had traveled that way since it began to storm, so it was necessary for them to break a great part of the way in the snow. Although he arrived late at Trenton, several people spent the evening with him, whom he "endeavored to build up and establish in the faith of the gospel."<sup>27</sup>

The next day the journey continued to be difficult, but Pilmore finally arrived at Brunswick on Thursday, December 30. He arrived in New York on Saturday, January 1, 1774.

When I arrived I found I was just in time, as the ship was to set sail the next day—I was greatly fatigued with my journey of an hundred miles through such a depth of snow, and very severe frost, and much more fit to retire to some hospital retreat among my cordial American Friends, than to undertake a voyage of more than three thousand miles across the Atlantic Ocean, in the very depth of winter; but in this I entirely gave up my own will, and renounced everything the earth can bestow, that I might preserve uniformity of conduct and act, in all things, according to the rules of friendship and the dictates of religion.—<sup>28</sup>

On Sunday, January 2, 1774, Pilmore preached his farewell sermon "with fellings too big for expression." About twelve o'clock Pilmore and Boardman were accompanied by "a great number of respectable citizens" to board the ship, whose captain was Captain Clark.

The return trip was made to England where Pilmore resumed his duties as a preacher in his home land. It would be of interest to know some of the thoughts of these first two missionaries as they returned from America. They must have returned with mixed emotions. The opportunities and blessings of their experiences in America far exceeded the trying and unpleasant experience that they had encountered.

During the first two years of his return, 1774 and 1775, he is not assigned a place to preach. At the Conference in August 1776, he was appointed to London, and the following two years he served the Norwick Circuit. Then follows one year at Nottingham, one year at Edinburgh, and his final year of service as a Methodist preacher was spent at York.

<sup>27</sup> IBID.

<sup>28</sup> IBID., pp. 294, 295.

A new relation was established that would bring Pilmore back to America for the remainder of his life.

While in Scotland (he) came into personal relations with Samuel Seabury, then, or about to be, Bishop of Connecticut with the result that he sought orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was ordained by Bishop Seabury, November 27, 1785, and advanced to the priesthood, two days later by the same bishop. Shortly afterward, he became rector of the three united parishes of Trinity, Oxford, All Saint's, Lower Dublin and St. Thomas, Whitemarsh, in the vicinity of Philadelphia. . . .

His zeal as a priest and his popularity as a preacher led to his appointment as assistant minister of St. Paul's (Philadelphia), in January, 1789, in which capacity he remained until February, 1794. In the latter year he received and accepted a call to Christ Church, then a new church, in New York City, where he labored acceptably ten years. At the end of this decade of service he returned to St. Paul's to be rectorate of which he had been elected March 5, 1804.<sup>29</sup>

Pilmore's first residence, while assistant to Dr. Samuel Magaw, Rector of St. Paul's Church, was near Poole's Bridge, in the upper part of Second Street. During this period of time he married and moved to a very plain three story house, on the east side of Fifth Street midway between Spruce and Pine Streets. It was during this time that the yellow fever scourge of 1793 swept through Philadelphia. Pilmore contracted this illness. It is not known how many were taken by the epidemic at St. Paul's but a list of sixty-seven received the rights of sepulcher in its church yard. Pilmore had for neighbors in the city such people as Stephen Girard, Alexander Hamilton, Robert Morris, George Washington, and John Adams.

#### A MAN "FULL OF UNCTION AND OF POWER"

The Reverend Joseph Pilmore, D. D., was Yorkshire built in body and character, intrepid, eloquent, full of unction and power."<sup>30</sup> He was born October 31, 1739, in the village of Tadmouth, in Yorkshire, England, and died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 24, 1825. His parents were members of the Church of England, but he, as a lad of sixteen, became acquainted with the Reverend John Wesley, then traveling through England, and was by him eventually drawn into the ministry.

Dr. Pilmore was educated at Wesley's famous Kingswood School, he was universally admitted to have been not only a

<sup>29</sup> 1760-1898—OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF OLD ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, PHILA., PA. Barratt, Norris Stonley Philadelphia. The Colonial Society Pennsylvania, 1917. pp. 115, 116.

<sup>30</sup> BARRATT'S CHAPEL AND METHODISM, Barratt, Hon. Norris S. Wilmington: The Historical Society of Delaware, 1911. p. 11.



man of considerable learning, but of great force of character. Completing his studies, he attached himself to the Society of Methodist for which he was appointed to teach and preach, and did so in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales for several years.<sup>31</sup>

There is one thing that should be noted. Various writings indicate that the name of Joseph Pilmore has various spellings. He used Pillmore, Pilmore, Pilmoor and Pilmoore. As is seen in the picture of his marker on his tomb it is spelled Pilmore. This has become the recognized spelling.

"The first mention of Pilmore as a Methodist preacher is found in the minutes of the Methodist Conferences which met at Manchester on August 20, 1765. The record shows that Pilmore was admitted into the Conference on trial at this time."<sup>32</sup> Thus it was four years after becoming a part of the conference and ten days before reaching the age of 30 that Pilmore stood on American soil at Gloucester Point, New Jersey. Were a missionary sent to the United States today, would his effectiveness be as great as was Pilmore's? Were Pilmore to return, landing somewhere on our shores in 1969, what results would he have? These are questions that are impossible to answer. There is one question for which we do have the answer: What did Pilmore accomplish for Christ and His Church?

His obituary, in the Philadelphia press, said in conclusion: 'His labors were blessed to the conversion of many. He preached the Gospel faithfully and labored zealously for the conversion of his fellow sinners; very many of whom look to him as their spiritual father. He has gone to that Master whom he remembered when almost every earthly friend was forgotten and we doubt not his entered into that rest which remaineth for the people of God'.<sup>33</sup>

This man was as equally loved and listened to while serving as a priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church as he was while serving as a Methodist preacher.

There were members of the Church who had been converted under his early ministry in his native country and had followed him to this adopted land; there were others, who had been brought by his instrumentality to the knowledge of the truth while he was a Methodist preacher in this City; besides very many to whom his word had been made the power of God unto salvation while he

ministered in St. Paul's Church. These circumstances formed (between pastor and people) the peculiar and most tender bond of gospel love.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. Pilmore was known for his personal knowledge of every member of his congregation, for his frequent visits in their homes, and was regarded by most as a member of the family. He rendered other services to his people and to us such as the care he gave in preserving the list of marriages and other church records, and his concern for the youth by beginning the first Episcopal Sunday School in Philadelphia.

His outstanding abilities and his faithful service to God and His Church was recognized in 1807 when the University of Pennsylvania conferred upon him the degree of D. D. He, through his "exercise of temperance and frugality" was able to give much to those in need. He generously endowed the Church's charitable institution.

He is said to have been twice married and to have had one child, a daughter who died in minority. About 1790, in Philadelphia, he married Mary (Benezet) Wood, widow of Joseph Wood, formerly of Georgia, and daughter of Daniel Benezet, Esq., by his wife Elizabeth North. Mrs. Pilmore was baptized at Christ Church, April 20, 1756, and died at her country-seat in Oxford township on Friday, July 1, 1808.<sup>35</sup>

Dr. Pilmore resigned the rectorate of St. Paul's in 1821. The Reverend Benjamin Allen became Dr. Pilmore's assistant when the people recognized that Pilmore's health was failing. One of his contemporaries said of him:

Still the old gentleman could not be kept out of the pulpit altogether, and near the close of his useful life, it was said that the sermon was pretty much the same no matter what was the text. This resulted not from want of energy, but from manifest failure of memory.<sup>36</sup>

Dr. Joseph Pilmore, died in the eighty-sixth year of his life, July 24, 1825. He was a man honored and loved by all to whom he was known. He was a man who faithfully and generously served two branches of the Christian Church which were organized at almost the same time. By nine months the Methodist Episcopal Church antedated the formal organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The separation was caused by the great error of Lowth, Bishop

<sup>31</sup> 1760-1898—OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF OLD ST. PAUL'S CHURCH( PHILA., PA. Barratt, Narris Stanley. Philadelphia: The Colonial Society Pennsylvania, 1917. p. 113.

<sup>32</sup> THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE REV. JOSEPH PILMORE, D. D. Stanger, Frank Bote-man, A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Temple University School of Theology, June 1942. p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> 1760-1898—OUTLINED OF THE HISTORY OF OLD ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, PHILA., PA. Barratt, Narris Stanley. Philadelphia: The Colonial Society Pennsylvania, 1917. p. 124.

<sup>34</sup> IBID., p. 116.

<sup>35</sup> IBID., p. 124.

<sup>36</sup> IBID., p. 120.

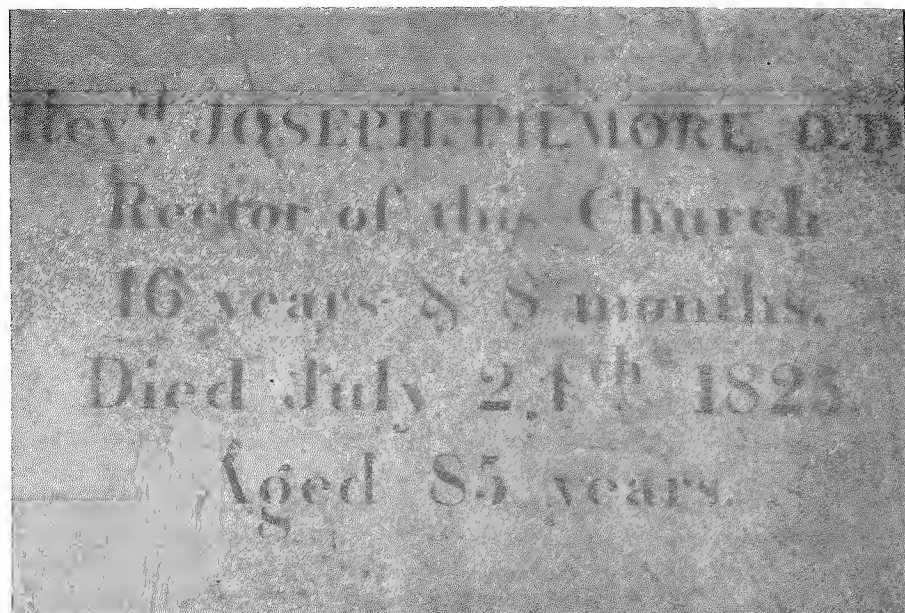


of London, who refused Wesley's request to ordain at least two clergymen who could administer the sacraments in America, with the result that the Church of England lost one hundred thousand of its most active members at a time they could be illy spared.<sup>37</sup>

His remains lie below the floor of a small storage room in St. Paul's Church, South Third Street, Philadelphia. The church no longer serves as a place of worship, but it is used as the headquarters of the Protestant Episcopal City Mission. Dr. Pilmore no more lives as a preacher in our time, but his life and his work continued as a mission to the Methodist and Episcopal Churches of 1969.

The stone on his crypt reads:

Revd. JOSEPH PILMORE, D. D.  
Rector of this Church  
16 years & 8 Months  
Died July 24th, 1825  
Aged 85 years



<sup>37</sup> IBID., p. 115.

## BICENTENNIAL BANQUET

THE HOLLY HOUSE  
Pennsauken, N. J.

October 24, 1969 — 7:00 O'Clock

BISHOP PRINCE A. TAYLOR, JR.  
Presiding

THE WESLEY GRACES "*Be Present at Our Table, Lord*"

THE INVOCATION

Dr. J. Hillman Coffee  
Co-chairman, Executive Committee

INTRODUCTIONS

Rev. F. Elwood Perkins  
Chairman, Executive Committee

PRESENTATION OF PILMORE'S "*Journal*" Dr. Frederick E. Maser

HYMN "*O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*"

ADDRESS "*A Giant Leap for Methodism*" Dr. Frank B. Stanger  
President, Asbury Theological Seminary

INTERLUDE AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE HYMN

1  
And are we yet alive,  
And see each other's face?  
Glory and thanks to Jesus give,  
For his almighty grace.

3  
Yet out of all the Lord  
Hath brought us by his love;  
And still he doth his help afford,  
And hides our life above.

2  
What troubles have we seen,  
What mighty conflicts past,  
Fightings without, and fears within,  
Since we assembled last!

4  
Then let us make our boast  
Of his redeeming power,  
Which saves us to the uttermost,  
Till we can sin no more. Amen.  
—Charles Wesley (Tune: Dennis)

DRAMATIC REVIEW

"*Appointment to America*"

Ruth Parsons Strahan

Dramatis Personae

John Wesley—Rev. Wm. R. McElwee

J. Pilmore—Rev. W. Robert Smith III

Secretary—Rev. W. Gordon Lowden

R. Boardman—Rev. John W. Page

PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

Dr. John A. McElroy  
Co-Chairman, Executive Committee

## DEDICATION OF THE MONUMENT

On the Delaware River at the County Park  
South of King and Market Streets  
Gloucester, N. J.

October 25, 1969—1:30 O'Clock

BISHOP FRED PIERCE CORSON  
Presiding

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Robert B. Steelman  
President, So. N. J. Historical Society

### HYMN "Give to the winds thy fears"

Paul Gerhardt (Tr. John Wesley)

Tune: FESTAL SONG 174 ("Rise up, O men of God")

1  
Give to the winds thy fears;  
Hope and be undismayed;  
God hears thy sighs and counts  
thy tears;  
God shall lift up thy head.

2  
Through waves and clouds and  
storms,  
He gently clears thy way;  
Wait thou his time; so shall this  
night  
Soon end in joyous day.

3  
Leave to his sovereign sway  
To choose and to command;  
So shall thou, wondering, own his  
way,  
How wise, how strong, his hand!

4  
Let us in life, in death,  
Thy steadfast truth declare,  
And publish with our latest  
breath  
Thy love and guadian care.  
Amen.

### PRAYER

Rev. Paul E. Spiecker  
President, No. N. J. Historical Society

### RECOGNITION OF GUESTS OF HONOR

Robert J. Mumford  
Chairman, Monument Committee

### THE HISTORICAL SETTING

Rev. F. Elwood Perkins

### UNVEILING OF THE PILMORE-BOARDMAN MONUMENT

Robert J. Mumford

### THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Bishop Fred Pierce Corson  
Titular Pastor, St. George's Church

### ADDRESS "The New Wilderness"

Bishop Prince A. Taylor, Jr.

### BENEDICTION

### GRATITUDE

Member of the Pilmore-Boardman Bicentennial Committee express to officials of Gloucester City, pastors and people of the United Methodist churches, and countless persons of talent and technique—whose prayers, labors, and gifts have contributed to this meaningful memorial—sincere thanks long outlasting any list of names and deeds.

## THE BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

BISHOP PRINCE A. TAYLOR, JR.  
Presiding Chairman

### Honorary Chairmen

Bishop J. Gordon Howard  
Bishop Fred P. Corson

Bishop Lloyd C. Wicke  
Bishop Edgar A. Love

### The Executive Committee

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Dr. J. Hillman Coffee  
Co-Chairman and Treasurer

Dr. John A. McElroy  
Co-Chairman

Rev. Paul W. vander Loo  
Secretary

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Public Relations

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W. Ronald Beppler  
Rev. Hooker D. Davis  
Harry F. Green

Rev. Charles E. Jones  
Rev. Albert V. Lang  
Dr. Fred E. Maser  
Robert J. Mumford  
Rev. Paul E. Spiecker

Rev. Robert B. Steelman  
Rev. Harry R. Stevenson, Jr.  
Ruth Parsons Strahan  
Walter B. Van Sant  
John W. Zelle

### The General Committee

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Rev. L. G. Atkinson  
Dr. James M. Ault  
Rev. David C. Evans  
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Rev. Paul A. Friedrich

Dr. Vernon B. Hampton  
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Lawrence E. Roher  
Dr. Charles A. Sayre  
Dr. Frank B. Stanger  
Leon E. Walker  
Rev. George Watt, Jr.

### Consultants

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Rev. C. Wesley Christman  
Rev. Robert L. Curry

Rev. Wm. C. Jason, Jr.  
Rev. J. Allen Kestle  
Rev. Joshua E. Licorish  
Howard T. Maag

Rev. Stacy D. Myers, Jr.  
Dr. John H. Ness, Jr.  
Rev. Edwin Schell



—Gift of the Area Boards of Laity  
Carved by Spity Eugene Sampieri  
Wm. B. Snelbaker and Son

## APPOINTMENT TO AMERICA

Written by

MRS. RUTH STRAHAN

(In costume, John Wesley, conference secretary, Pilmoor and Boardman at dinner. Following speaker, audience sings a Wesley hymn, perhaps "And are we yet alive. . . ." Curtain opens on table and chair R.C. Secretary proceeds to stage, John Wesley stops and speaks to several men on his way to stage. Confers with secretary while audience is finishing hymn—then speaks:)

WESLEY: My brethren, before we close the 1768 conference here in Bristol, we have one other item of business to bring to your attention: the matter of sending someone to America to supervise the work there. Now, no one knows better than I what a wilderness this is—and how hostile some of the people are. During my stay in Georgia I was discouraged many times by the lawlessness and apathy I found. But we have received a letter from Brother Thomas Taylor begging us to send a preacher to New York to help the society there. He says (consults letter) "we must have a man of wisdom, of sound faith, and a good disciplinarian, one whose heart and soul are in the work, and I doubt not but by the goodness of God such a flame would be soon kindled as would never stop until it reached the South Sea."

(puts letter down) Now brethren, there seems to be an urgent need here in this new country for leadership. Who will volunteer to go?

(pauses, looks around expectantly. He gets no response.) Will anyone step forward and volunteer? (His face falls—looks at secretary)

Then there is nothing we can do to help just now. But I ask you, my brethren to think on this appeal long and hard, pray about it, and if anyone has a change of heart before next year's conference at Leeds, I will be most happy to hear about it. The 1769 conference is adjourned. (He turns to secretary, curtains close).

(Hymn. During the singing, table and chair moved to L.C. At close of hymn, curtains open on Wesley standing behind secretary, looking over his shoulder. Secretary is pointing out something in ledger book. Wesley comes forward with book, speaks to audience.)

WESLEY: And so, in the closing minutes of this conference at Leeds in the year of our Lord, 1769, I am pleased to report that our Methodist societies have contributed two thousand, four hundred and fifty-eight pounds, nineteen shillings and seven pence toward the debt.

(applause from audience. Secretary hands Wesley several letters as he takes back ledger book.)

Now, brethren, I want to remind you of the pressing letter of appeal we received from Brother Taylor of our society in New York over a year ago and which I first read at the conference in Bristol. To our great disappointment none of the brethren at that time offered to go. This weighed heavily on our hearts and so copies of the letter were sent to all forty of my assistants to read to their societies. That you have all done so is proven by the fact that monies in the amount of 70 pounds have been sent to us for this project. Since last year we have received several other letters from our laborers in America crying for help. We have societies meeting in rigging lofts in Philadelphia and Baltimore, now. As you remember from Brother Taylor's letter the New York society outgrew its loft, purchases ground on John Street and built a preaching house. It was finished and dedicated last October 30, with Brother Embury preaching the sermon from a pulpit he built with his own hands. It was not easy for just a few dedicated men in our Methodist society to accomplish even this much. Captain Thomas Webb, whose fervor and eloquence are well known gave 30 pounds of his own money towards the ground and loaned the society many times that amount to build the building—besides going out among the people of New York asking for contributions. As the interest on borrowed money in these days is such a great burden—SEVEN PER CENT—we are grateful that our members here have donated money to help our friends in New York. But, my brethren, money is not enough. In the name of our Lord who sent his own Son to labor among us, we must accept this challenge and help to spread, in our way, the knowledge of the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to these people in America who seem to be hungering for the word. We cannot neglect our Christian duty to these men—Webb, Embury, Taylor, and countless others who so desperately need us that they have offered to sell their coats and shirts to pay the passage of any who will answer this call. Now, I ask the members of this conference once again: WHO WILL GO?

(sees hand) Ah—there is a hand—stand up—(recognizes him) Brother Boardman—(sees another) And another—Brother Pilmoor, come up, come up!

(they walk to stage. Wesley turns to secretary) Brother secretary, please add the 50th appointment to our list: Appointment to America—Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor! (conference member applaud)

(Pilmoor and Boardman confer with secretary. Wesley addresses audience)

My brethern, I think of the future and my heart is filled to overflowing as I dwell on the success of our efforts. God has blessed us, indeed. Soon we will have Methodist societies all over the vast new country of America. I pray to God we can develop the leadership necessary to go among the people of this great land preaching—but more important—ministering to their needs. As you have heard me say it is my conviction that preaching of itself is not enough. A preacher must face his auditors "in society" where hearers may talk back and where inadequacy and failure in communication might be corrected by the insights of interpersonal relationships. To this end we **MUST** attract enough people to answer the many calls for help.

(Secretary, Pilmoor, Boardman move quietly off the stage. Music starts softly. Wesley is alone on stage.) (spotlight on Wesley)

I can almost hear the words of the future—someone standing in my place 200 years from now listening to the cries for help:

(the following begins as a litany)

VOICE: We need you in the slums!

WESLEY: Who will go?

VOICE: We need you in the poverty in the mountains!

WESLEY: Who will go?

VOICE: We need you in suburbia!

WESLEY: Who will go?

VOICE: We need you in the ghettos!

WESLEY: Who will go?

(voices start again, more urgently and pleading, Wesley's "who will go" thrown in, music builds to crescendo—suddenly everything stops.)

WESLEY: (looks directly around at audience, challenging) **WILL YOU?**  
(spotlight out, curtain)

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Our new United Methodist Church has made some changes in the way the historical work of our Conference is done. We now have in our Conference a Commission on Archives and History. Members of this Commission are elected by the Conference on nomination by the Conference Nominating Committee. In addition to this small group we still have our Historical Society which any interested individual may join and which is for the purpose of promoting interest in the preservation of the history of our Conference and its antecedents. The officers of the Commission are the officers of the Society. A Committee is preparing a new Constitution for the Historical Society which will be presented for adoption at our annual meeting on May 9th.

You may join the Society by the payment of two dollars dues to Miss Emily Johnson, Financial Secretary, 333 West Jersey Avenue, Pitman, N. J. 08071. The Benjamin Abbott Life Membership is fifty dollars. Inquiries are invited concerning it. Churches are encouraged to consider becoming Life Members of the Society.

You are invited to use our Audio Visual Library at the Conference Office, Box 307, Cherry Hill, N. J. 08034. Our Library is also housed there and can be used by anyone for research.

We are looking forward to the building of the new Library at Pennington School where we have been promised ample room to house our Library Collection in modern and adequate facilities.

You can help us preserve the history of our Conference by seeing that records are carefully and properly preserved. Send us programs and booklets of special events in your church. These and other historical information can be sent to our Archival-Custodian, Dr. J. Hillman Coffee, 17 Brainerd Street, Mount Holly, New Jersey 08060.